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BY

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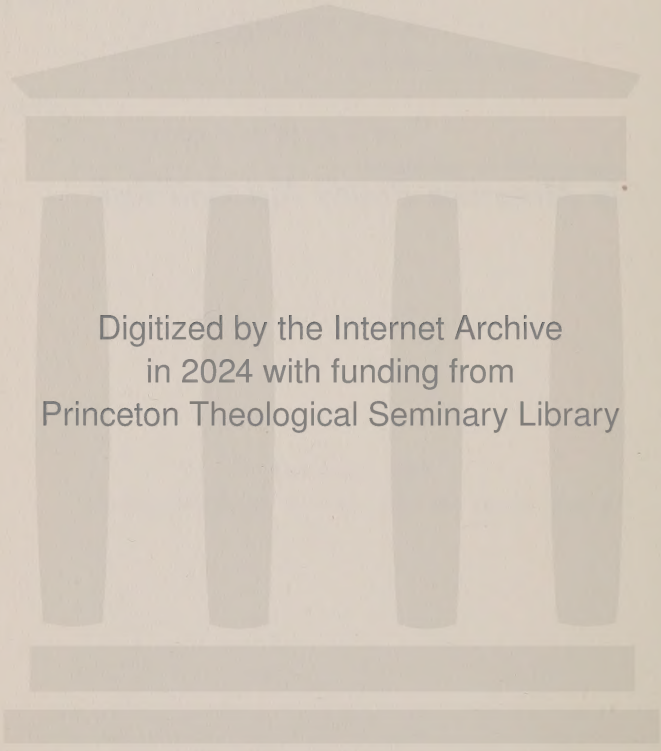
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INTRODUCTION

Every day makes more evident the fact that two strong essentially incompatible ways of life will divide the loyalties of men and nations in the political world of tomorrow. They are genuine democracy and Marxian totalitarianism." [1] It is noteworthy that the American Bishops who issued the statement containing these two sentences make no reference to that false Liberalism which is likewise opposed to genuine democracy, though at the opposite extreme from Totalitarianism. The omission is doubtles due to the fact that nineteenth-century Liberalism is a dying creed, where it has not already passed away, in this day of increasing concentration of power in the absolute State. There is little need to warn the world against so thoroughly discredited a doctrine. There is great need, on the other hand, to beware of twentieth-century absolutism, the most serious actual threat to society and one more detrimental to souls than Liberalism ever was.

Liberalism is the political consequence of Naturalism, a philosophical doctrine which repudiates the supernatural order and all revealed teaching, and holds that the human reason is the supreme principle, source, and judge of truth.[2] Totalitarianism

[1] From a statement by the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, April 14, 1945.

[2] "What *Naturalists* or *Rationalists* aim at in philosophy, that the supporters of *Liberalism*, carrying out the principles laid down by Naturalism, are attempting in the domain of morality and politics. The fundamental doctrine of *Rationalism* is the supremacy of the human reason, which, refusing due submission to the divine and eternal reason, proclaims its own independence, and constitutes itself the supreme principle and source and judge of truth. Hence these followers of Liberalism deny the existence of any divine authority to which obedience is due and proclaim that every man is the law to himself. So arises that ethical system which they style *independent* morality, and which, under the guise of liberty,

is the political consequence of Liberalism, as an extreme reaction to the excessive liberty and defiance of authority which the error of the liberals created. It is therefore a grandchild of Naturalism and Rationalism, though often so unnatural and irrational that the family resemblance is hardly perceptible; the ancestor was clearly eccentric but the descendant is maniacal.

In the pages that follow we shall try to show that the Supernaturalism of the Catholic Church's teaching is the only effective answer to the Naturalism which bred Liberalism first, then Totalitarianism. Emphasis will be laid therefore on the *theological* aspects of the modern political problem created by the friction between a dying Liberalism and the growth of Totalitarianism. Specifically we shall concentrate upon the problem of liberty, which is not only a political, but even more fundamentally, a theological problem. And our main concern in dealing with this point will be to show the relevance of the Christian theology of human liberty to politics. As far as possible we intend to rely on the social teachings of recent Pontiffs, especially Leo XIII, Pius XI, and Pius XII, as well as on the theological doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Since liberty is of the essence of genuine democracy, a proper understanding of its meaning is vital to the success of a democratic order. That understanding will never be complete without a theology of liberty. The widespread decline of civil and political liberty in the twentieth century is due as much to ignorance of the nature of freedom as it is to any other cause. And the nature of freedom is never more unknown, never more mysterious, than when the light of revelation and the theo-

exonerates man from any obedience to the commands of God, and substitutes a boundless licence . . . It follows . . . that the authority in the State is then taken to come from the people only; and that, just as every man's individual reason is his only rule of life, so the collective reason of the community should be the supreme guide in the management of all public affairs. Hence the doctrine of the supremacy of the greater number, and that all right and all duty reside in the majority." Leo XIII, *Libertas* (June 20, 1888).

logical science of revelation are not admitted as pertinent to the mystery.

Liberalism and Totalitarianism are not only political errors; they are also theological errors, heresies. As such, they must be dealt the strongest blow by orthodoxy on the theological level. Though both are very vulnerable also on philosophical grounds, it is at least a tactical error to limit opposition to them to the lower plane. And once it is understood that both Liberalism and Totalitarianism are creeds as well as philosophies, whose appeal is as much to the religious as to the political instincts of men, the neglect of a theological resistance is seen to be unwise and short-sighted. Liberals or totalitarians may claim that their "isms" are grounded on a purely rational and scientific approach to human problems, but the claim will not stand up under investigation. Their disavowal of religious intent does not make them less religious in fact. Liberalism's deification of the individual and Totalitarianism's apotheosis of the state are the first principles of systems political in intention and religious in execution. Their harnessing for political ends of a zeal and devotion worthy of better causes is a diversion of religious drives in the nature of man which must be utilized in the service of an idol if they are not turned to the true God.

These heresies must be opposed and drained of their attraction on a theological plane. No merely philosophical attack will succeed in unsettling the faith of their adherents. If the liberals and totalitarians were not believers, holding to dogmas they accept on the authority of men who have deceived them or have themselves been deceived, logic alone might be more effective in stripping the mask of plausibility from their errors. As it is, only the logic of events has thus far succeeded in leading multitudes of liberals to abandon their heresy, and there is danger that time alone will convince the devotees of absolutism of their errors, as the fruits of their fallacy ripen. Only a faith, and a far more reasonable faith, can successfuly chal-

lenge the attractiveness of superstitions whose grip on the will is much more steady than its seat in the mind.[3]

The crisis of the modern world is no merely political or economic struggle; it is essentially a moral and religious crisis. It has been justly described as not so much a struggle between Right and Left as between Above and Below. It is a battle to the death between a Naturalism that has plunged in recent years into a veritable denial of nature itself, and the Supernaturalism of Christianity; between the divinely planned City of God, and the humanly planned City of Man. In its depths it is a battle between Christ and Satan, with the souls of men as the prize of victory.

Knowledge of the devil and of his influence upon human affairs is only one of the many illuminating contributions theology makes to a complete political theory. The philosopher may tell us much of God's dominion over mankind, but only the theologian can speak with authority of Satan's potent influence upon history. This point alone should make it evident that philosophy can never deal adequately with all social problems and of itself light the road to a solution of social disorders, no matter how true be its principles or how legitimate its conclusions. For philosophy, *qua* philosophy, has no knowledge of diabolical pressures upon mankind, no assurance even of the existence of the angelic order, and certainly no consciousness of the sole remedy for demonic interference in society, that is, the Passion of Christ and the grace merited by His Death. There is great wisdom in the words of de Rougemont, "What democracies in general, and America in particular, most lack is belief in the Devil." [4]

[3] "Every living culture must possess some spiritual dynamic . . . Normally this dynamic is supplied by a religion, but in exceptional circumstances the religious impulse may disguise itself under philosophical or political forms." C. Dawson, *Progress and Religion* (New York, 1938), p. viii.

[4] D. deRougemont, *The Devil's Share* (tr. Haakon Chevalier) (New York, 1945), p. 11.

Though theology has in modern times been dethroned, outside the Church, from the royal position of queen of the sciences, there have not been lacking eminent witnesses to its importance in the field of politics. Proudhon, atheist and anarchist, wrote one hundred years ago, "It is surprising that at the bottom of our politics we always find theology." [5] More recently, General Douglas MacArthur, speaking of the world's vain efforts for peace, declared, "The problem is basically theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advance in science, art, literature, and all material and cultural developments of the past two thousand years. It must be of the spirit, if we are to save the flesh."

The very titles of recent writings on the democratic and liberal tradition indicate a new awareness and a new attitude regarding the relationship of Christianity and theology to political questions. Even outside the Church there is an increasing realization that the brotherhood of mankind which everyone postulates as a condition of social order cannot be had without divine help, as the Catholic Church has never ceased to proclaim; and that the chief error of the liberal and secular approach to human problems has been the neglect of the God who makes true fraternity possible.[6]

Within the Church the doctrine most highly recommended for the solution of social and political disorders is the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. Leo XIII wrote:

[5] Quoted from *Les confessions d'un Revolutionnaire* (Paris, 1849), p. 61, by G. Briefs, "Philosophy of the Democratic State," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 1939 (Washington, 1940), p. 36.

[6] Recent writings of this type include: N. Nicklem, *The Theology of Politics* (Oxford, 1941); W. Orton, *The Liberal Tradition* (Yale University Press, 1945), a work subtitled "A Study of the Social and Spiritual Conditions of Freedom"; R. B. Perry, *Puritanism and Democracy* (New York, 1944); D. Runes, *Bible for the Liberal* (New York, 1946); "Needed: A Spiritual Basis for Democracy," *N. Y. Times Magazine*, May 27, 1945; "The Spiritual Basis of Democracy," *Science, Philosophy and Religion* (New York, 1942), and "The Religious Background of Democracy," *ibid.*

Domestic and civil society, which is so sadly imperilled by the curse of pernicious opinions, would subsist much more securely and peacefully if the doctrines inculcated in the academies and schools were sounder and more accordant with the authoritative teaching of the Church, such as the works of St. Thomas contain. For the opinions of St. Thomas respecting the true nature of liberty now running into licence, respecting the divine origin of every form of authority, respecting laws and their binding force, respecting the paternal and just dominion of sovereigns, respecting obedience to the higher powers, and mutual charity to all, have very great and indeed irresistible power for the overthrowing of those novel principles of legislation which are plainly seen to be perilous to a peaceful state of things and the public weal.[7]

Pius XI renewed this recommendation:

Since [St. Thomas] is so clearly perfect in his theology, he gives secure reasons and precepts not only for the direction of man's individual life, but likewise for domestic and civil society. Thus he is our source for economic and political science. In the second part of his *Summa Theologica* he deals with paternal authority and family life, with the lawful authority in state or nation, with the law of nature and international law, with peace and war, justice and property, with laws and allegiance, with our duties to private individuals and the common good, and that in the natural as well as the supernatural order. If in private, in public, and in international relations all these things that Thomas lays down were kept holy and inviolate, nothing more would be needed to reconcile man to the 'peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ' which the whole world so greatly desires.[8]

What has been said regarding the supreme importance and indispensability of a theological viewpoint on these matters provides an *apologia*, if one is needed, for what follows in these pages. Pope Pius XII has said, "Thank God, one may believe the time has passed when the claim that moral and Gospel principles should guide the life of States and peoples was disdainfully thrust aside as unreal. The events of these war years

[7] *Aeterni Patris* (August 4, 1879).
[8] *Studiorum Ducem* (June 29, 1923).

have amply confuted the scorners of those principles in a harder way than one could ever have imagined." [9] If much of what is said here seems platitudinous or proverbial, it will not follow that these things go without saying. For these fundamental human and Christian truths have been long forgotten, or ignored, in a large part of the modern world, in practice at least if not always in theory. Our chief intention is to emphasize the essential and indivisible relationship between Christianity and a just social order, between Christian liberty and social and political liberties, between true democracy and the spiritual side of man's nature. For the restoration of order and the preservation of freedom is "essentially a spiritual task which demands the spiritual vision that is faith and the spiritual will that is charity." [10]

[9] *Christmas Message*, 1944.

[10] C. Dawson, *The Judgment of the Nations* (New York, 1942), p. 221.

Chapter I

NATURE OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

1. Liberty in General.

" Of all the loose terms in the world liberty is the most indefinite." [11] So wrote Edmund Burke in the eighteenth century. Two centuries later we find the same indefiniteness in the use of this word. Burke's complaint was followed by a definition: " The liberty I mean is *social* freedom. It is that state of things in which liberty is secured by equality of restraint . . . This kind of liberty is, indeed, but another name for justice . . ." [12] But the laxer intellectual standards of our day do not compel modern statesmen to exercise the same care. Definition of terms is carelessly (or even, in some instances, carefully) disregarded; the resulting semantic confusion has actually become one of the chief modern implements of tyranny. In the process of becoming a catchword, " liberty " has almost ceased to be a concept.

Before attempting anything else, then, we must try to disentangle the network of meanings, true, half true, or false, which are twined round the word. Etymologically, liberty stems from the Latin adjective *liber* and the corresponding noun *libertas*, meaning respectively, " free from slavery, of free birth," and " freedom, as opposed to slavery." [13] As far as modern English is concerned, " liberty " and " freedom " are practically synono-

[11] Quoted from *Correspondence*, I, 312, in J. A. Ryan and M. F. X. Millar, *The State and the Church* (New York, 1922), p. 146.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] The Greek equivalents of *liber* and *libertas* are *eleutheros* and *eleutheria*. In the New Testament these words have in some contexts a special meaning, i. e., freedom not to practice the Mosaic law; freedom from the yoke of Jewish rituals. Cf. *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, IV, 237-B.

mous. Though shades of meaning are suggested in dictionaries and elsewhere, we shall use the two words interchangeably.[14]

The philology of "liberty" and "freedom" presents no problem. It is freedom as a reality and ideal which so often evades precise definition and creates confusion. Since liberty is predicated of the Creator and of creatures, of spiritual and of material things, of internal as well as external actions, of supernatural as well as natural life and activity, of powers as well as of acts and habits, of evil as well as of good actions, the need of the broadest possible viewpoint in studying the nature of the reality designated by the terms "liberty" and "freedom" is obvious.

Theologian and philosopher agree that the most general implication, the common denominator, in the idea of freedom, wherever it may be applied, is "immunity or exemption from something."[15] The antonyms of freedom are "slavery" and "subjection."[16] As a privation, each species of liberty will have to be defined in terms of the type of subjection or servitude to which it is opposed.[17]

Before proceeding to distinguish on this basis the various kinds of freedom, however, it may be well to call attention here to the chief defect in many, if not most, definitions of freedom. That defect lies in isolating one type or aspect of liberty and attributing to it the universality of the genus. The concept of liberty itself thus lives in bondage, imprisoned in the limits of philosophies too narrow to embrace the whole of its reality. Civil and political freedoms are often regarded, especially in modern times, as the principal, or even the only, types of free-

[14] *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, 1942, fifth ed.), p. 399. Cf. also Ross Hoffman, *Tradition and Progress* (Milwaukee, 1938), pp. 103-104; Fulton Sheen, *Freedom under God* (Milwaukee, 1940), p. 252.

[15] Billuart, *Summa Sancti Thomae* (Paris), "De Actibus Humanis," Diss. II, art, I, no. 1 (p. 225 ff); Hugon, *Metaphysica* (Paris, 1907), I, 160.

[16] Billuart, *loc. cit.*

[17] *II Sent.*, d. 25, q. 5, a. 5, corp.

dom, and freedom is then defined, for example, as " liberty from legal obligation, which is left or granted by a sovereign government to any of its own subjects "; [18] or as " the assurance that every man shall be protected in doing what he believes his duty against the influence of authority and majorities, custom and opinion." [19]

Sorokin has justly pointed out that this emphasis on a particular type of freedom, to the exclusion of other, and more important, kinds, " is the most common mistake of all the works on history and the progress of civil and other liberties written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries." And he adds, ". . . They imply that liberty appeared in human history only with the ' Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens,' or the like. For their authors, there was hardly any freedom or liberty in the history of the Oriental and other countries, or in medieval Europe." [20] With good reason then does he hold that " it is superficial to discuss freedom generally, without specifying the type involved." [21] We shall try to avoid this mistake

[18] Austin's definition, quoted by Ryan-Millar, *op. cit.*, p. 146, from *Lectures on Jurisprudence,* edited by R. Campbell, p. 159. Cf. Ryan-Millar, *op. cit.*, pp. 140 ff. for other definitions and a criticism of them.

[19] Lord Acton's definition, quoted *ibid.*, from his *History of Freedom and Other Essays* (London, 1909), p. 3. Lord Acton knew at least two hundred definitions of freedom, only twelve of which he could accept. Few appear in his writings. (Cf. F. E. Lally, *As Lord Acton Says* (Newport, R. I., 1942), pp. 134-135). For other definitions cf. also J. Clayton, " Where is Freedom? ", *Blackfriars,* XII (June, 1940), pp. 347-352.

[20] P. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics,* III (New York, 1937), 163. In *God in Economic Life* (New York, Paulist Press, 1943), p. 22, Wilfred S. Parsons, S. J., brings out the same point: " It has grown to be a custom among uninformed popular writers to speak of liberty and equality as if they were an invention or discovery of the revolutionists in America and France in the eighteenth century. This is simply because they are ignorant of history. But because these popular writers talk this way, Catholics often have an uneasy suspicion that there is something heretical about liberty and equality. Nothing could be more untrue. The Fathers of the Church and the Medieval writers, in talking about the state, constantly spoke of liberty and equality, and held that it was in fact Christianity which introduced these two concepts into Western civilization."

[21] *Ibid.*

by qualifying the terms liberty or freedom wherever the context does not make clear which of the many types of liberty is under discussion.

2. Kinds of Liberty.

A. Uncreated Liberty

Freedom, understood as immunity or exemption from subjection or bondage of one kind or another, is predicated of God as well as of creatures. The first distinction to be made, therefore, is between uncreated and created liberty. Like other perfections discoverable in creation and predicated of the Creator, freedom is to be attributed to God analogically, not univocally, for in Him the mode of freedom differs infinitely from the manner in which creatures may share it.[22] Liberty is found in God *formally*, like being, truth, goodness, and other perfections in whose formal concept no imperfection is implied. It is a *perfectio simpliciter simplex*, like intelligence and life; not a *perfectio mixta*, like reason or sensory life. In other words, liberty is a perfection which can be attributed to God without reservation and in a formal sense, once our minds have stripped the concept of the limitations and imperfections associated with freedom in finite and created entities. In God freedom is absolute, without limitation of any kind; in creatures it is relative, according to the various limited modalities of the natures which participate in it.[23]

God's liberty is a perfection of His will.[24] It consists in a supreme independence of all things apart from Himself, a complete immunity from subjection or necessity of any kind, except the essential necessity of knowing and loving Himself in an eternal unchanging act that is identical with His nature. Crea-

[22] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 5; also R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *God: His Existence and His Nature*, I (St. Louis, 1934), pp. 205 ff., concerning analogy; also II (St. Louis, 1936), pp. 203 ff.

[23] Y. Simon, "Liberty and Authority," in *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 1940, pp. 86 ff.

[24] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 19, a. 3; *I Cont. Gent.*, 88; *de Ver.*, q. 24, a. 3.

tion is a product of this infinite freedom,[25] and God's independence in relation to all His creatures is as absolute after as it is before they are brought into being.

Since there is no real division or distinction of any sort in God, we can say that God *is* liberty, just as we say God *is* love or truth. All true freedom outside of Him is a reflection of this limitless liberty whereby the divine will is immune from necessitation and coercion and is unchangeably fixed in infinite goodness. In God there is liberty *per essentiam*; in creatures, *per participationem*.

B. Angelic Liberty.

This distinction leads us logically to a consideration of the varied types of created participation in the absolute freedom of God. Here the broadest differentiation is between angelic and human freedom.[26] In both the angelic and the human order the basic liberty is the natural freedom of choice which is proper to intellectual essences.[27] This is clearly distinguished from the supernatural liberty of grace and glory by which the freedom of angels and men is most truly fulfilled. In other words, we must distinguish on both the angelic and the human levels between the natural liberty of the created will and the supernatural liberty which perfects the wills of creatures in union with God.

[25] Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (Freiburg, 1937), 374; 706; etc. Cf. also *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 19, a. 3; Garrigou-Lagrange, *op. cit.*, II, 341 ff.

[26] Though "freedom" is often predicated of irrational creatures, or even of inanimate natures, this is an extension of the use of the term; more accurately, the activity of creatures lower than man should be called "spontaneous" rather than "free." Spontaneity implies an absence of external restraint, whereas freedom or liberty mean an absence of any inner necessitation or determination. The former is freedom only from exterior compulsion; the latter, immunity from interior necessity. Rational creatures can have both; lower creation, only immunity from outer coercion. Cf. Billuart, *loc. cit.*, p. 225.

[27] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 59, a. 3; corp.: "Wherever there is intellect, there is free-will. It is therefore manifest that just as there is intellect, so is there free-will in the angels, and in a higher degree of perfection than in man." Cf. also *ibid.*, q. 83.

As imperishable and indestructible as the spiritual substances in which it is rooted, the natural freedom of choice in the angels is an immunity in the intellectual appetite from inner necessitation and outer violence; it gives the angels dominion over their activity. They have both liberty of contradiction, i. e. liberty of exercise, by which their wills are free to act or not to act; and liberty of specification, by which their wills, in the act of deliberate choice, may choose any of several possible objects presented to the will by the intellect. As a natural property of the created will, it is found intact in the fallen angels as well as in those who persevered in grace.[28] For not only the blessed angels in heaven but the reprobate also in hell —and this is true also of human spirits in either place—are free to choose this or that object, free to use the power of choice or not to use it, even though their wills are unchangeably fixed in their last ends.[29] Immutability in the final possession of the last end is no hindrance to all exercise of liberty, for the act of election is the proper act of the free will, and election is not concerned with a choice of ends. The impossibility of a change or choice in relation to the final end of the will does not eliminate the power to choose among goods that are *ad finem*. For freedom of choice, in angels as well as in men, is definable in terms of means rather than ends: "the faculty of choosing means fitted to the end proposed." [30]

But it was not for this freedom that the angels were created, though it is the basic liberty from which every other kind of freedom must flow. Freedom of the will is a power to be perfected, not the perfection of freedom. And the angels' natural

[28] Though the freedom of the angels is not a defined doctrine of the Church, it is a teaching which clearly pertains to faith. In the Scriptures the angels are described as creatures whose good or evil use of freedom is rewarded or punished; with regard to the fallen angels the Fourth Council of the Lateran (1215) says: "Diabolus enim et alii daemones a Deo quidem natura creati sunt boni, sed ipsi per se facti sunt mali." (Denz. 428)

[29] *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 18, a. 4, ad 3.

[30] Leo XIII, *Libertas*. Cf. also *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 83, a. 3; III, q. 18, a. 4.

freedom of choice is perfected by the infusion of the supernatural freedom of grace and glory. This freedom the rebel angels lost when they fell from grace. They are condemned to an eternity of sinfulness and undeveloped freedom in suffering that loss of God which is the essential penalty of their sin.

It may be noted here that the beatified angels have in their supernaturalized wills that freedom through charity to which Christian men are taught to aspire, but that freedom in them, though supernatural, is not *Christian* freedom. The reason is that the human Christ is not the channel for the infusion of supernatural life into the angels, but into men.[31]

C. Human Liberty.

We have pointed out above that the distinction between natural and supernatural freedom must be applied to the liberty of men as well as of angels. In the natural freedom of the human will a twofold distinction must be made, between freedom from coaction and freedom from necessitation. The former, also termed freedom of spontaneity, is immunity from external determination or violence; the latter, freedom from both external and internal determination. In this second type of liberty we have natural freedom of choice properly so called. The first, freedom of spontaneity, is found in all activity that proceeds from some intrinsic principle, and is absent only from things done by force or extrinsic impulse against natural inclination.[32] Freedom of spontaneity is rather freedom of action than freedom of volition.

There are three aspects to the will's freedom from necessitation: freedom of contradiction, of specification, and of contrariety. The first is the will's liberty of exercise with regard to its act; the phrase, " freedom of contradiction," denotes the power to will or not will. The second is the will's freedom with regard to particular objects which are means to the end; " free-

[31] *III Sent.*, d. 13, q. 2, a. 2.

[32] E. Hugon, O. P., *Metaphysica* (Paris, 1907), I, 160 ff.; 179.

dom of specification" signifies that the will can elect this or that object to specify its act, as and when it chooses. The third is the will's freedom in relation to its last end; "freedom of contrariety" is had when the will is at liberty, physically, though not morally, to choose evil as well as good. This last, sometimes termed moral liberty, is not essentially different from freedom of specification; except for the fact that liberty of contrariety deals with a choice of ends rather than means to an end, it is identical with freedom of specification.[33]

The first of the above types of natural liberty is of the essence of human freedom; the second pertains to the perfection of freedom; the third is a defect found in the liberty of those creatures who are imperfect by reason of not being finally confirmed in good.[34] The choosing of evil may be regarded as a sign of liberty, as sickness is a proof of life. But to will evil is not liberty or a part of liberty.[35] If the power to choose evil were of the essence or of the perfection of freedom, God Himself would not be free, nor would Christ and the blessed in heaven. Sin is in a real sense more truly slavery than an expression of freedom; freedom is most perfectly developed where sin is an impossibility.[36]

What was said of the natural liberty of angels is true also of free will in man: man was not created for this liberty alone. The free will is a faculty to be developed, not the perfection of human freedom. The fulness of development comes to it not from nature alone, but from the supernatural life of grace, which perfects nature. Without grace the will and its freedom

[33] Cf. H. Merkelbach, O.P., *Summa Theologiae Moralis* (Paris, 1938), I, 87.
[34] Merkelbach, *ibid.*; *Dict. Theol. Cath.*, IX, 659 ff.; *de Ver.* q. 22, a. 6.
[35] *De Ver., loc. cit.*
[36] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 62, a. 8, ad 3: "It belongs to the perfection of its liberty for the free-will to be able to choose between opposite things, keeping the order of the end in view; but it comes of the defect of liberty for it to choose anything by turning away from the order of the end; and this is to sin. Hence there is greater liberty of will in the angels, who cannot sin, than there is in ourselves, who can sin."

remain, but survive undeveloped, cursed with an inborn deficiency in the pursuit of true good. For the will has been vitiated by the sin of Adam; since the fall, man is inclined to choose evil, even though the will is never forced, against the original drive of its nature, to make an evil choice. Man lost the fulness of liberty in Eden, his original freedom from fault and unhappiness; [37] in its place is a moral bondage from which no power or effort exclusively his own can release him. The primitive misuse of freedom by the father of the race has infected our wills, and the other faculties of the soul also, to such an extent that they cannot be without sin, as they could before the fall.[38] The will's bias towards evil cannot be rectified by any natural means; free will must be emancipated by divine grace, or it is the tool of man's self-destruction.[39] Grace alone makes a free will a good will.

The supernatural life of divine grace is then the only source of full spiritual freedom for intellectual creatures, a freedom which means union with God and emancipation from the bondage of sin. There are two stages in this supernatural freedom: the freedom of grace in this life; the freedom of glory in the next. This is the freedom, shared in varying degrees but essentially the same in all, possessed by all the just on earth and all the angels and saints in heaven; on earth imperfect and incomplete, in heaven perfect and full.[40] On earth the degrees of this liberty correspond to the degrees of charity in the soul, or the three stages of development in the supernatural life: of beginners, of the proficient, and of the perfect.[41]

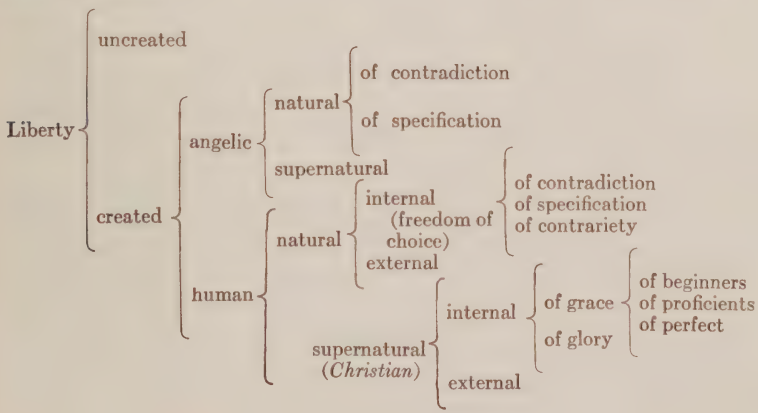
As it is in men, this freedom of grace and glory is essentially *Christian* freedom, because it was won for men, and is given to them, by Christ. In the angels, however, as we have pointed out above, this same liberty is supernatural without being at

[37] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 83, a. 2, ad 3.
[38] *De Ver.*, q. 24, a. 4, ad 6. Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 85, a. 3.
[39] *De Ver.*, q. 24, a. 1.
[40] *In Joann.*, c. 8, lect. 4.
[41] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 184, a. 4.

the same time Christian, since Christ did not redeem the angels but only mankind. He is their Head, but He is not their Liberator, because grace was given to them independently of Christ's influence when they were created, and glory also was the reward of those who persevered, without the mediation of the God-Man. Christian freedom is, therefore, a specifically human freedom, though the supernatural liberty of the angels is generically the same life of grace and glory.

We shall return later to a fuller treatment of Christian freedom. Here we must continue to distinguish various other types of freedom, all of which are related in some manner to the supernatural freedom of grace and glory. Up to this point we have been dealing entirely with the internal and spiritual freedoms of intellectual creatures. Man, however, as a composite of spirit and matter, needs for his perfection both as a man and as a Christian, external liberty. The first distinction to be placed, therefore, is between man's natural freedom and his supernatural freedom; the second, between internal and external freedom in both the natural and the supernatural order.[42]

[42] The divisions of liberty we have indicated up to now are outlined in the following schema:



Man's internal freedom in the natural order is the freedom of choice we have treated above. His external natural liberty is of two main types: freedom for man as an individual; freedom for men as members of society. We shall use the terms *individual* and *societal* to designate these two kinds of external freedom.

As an individual, every man has certain rights flowing from the natural law itself, which he must have exterior liberty to exercise. Nature itself is the basis for each man's right to life, to property, to growth in knowledge and virtue, to divine worship according to the dictates of a right conscience. Pius XII has enumerated the following as "fundamental personal rights":

the right to maintain and develop one's corporal, intellectual and moral life and especially the right to religious formation and education; the right to worship God in private and public and to carry on religious works of charity; the right to marry and to achieve the aim of married life; the right to conjugal and domestic society; the right to work as the indispensable means towards the maintenance of family life; the right to free choice of a state of life, and hence, too, of the priesthood or religious life; the right to the

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We may observe here that we are not assigning a place in our division of liberty to the perverse freedom of actual sin, except to the extent that it is implied, as act is implied in potentiality, in "freedom of contrariety." St. Thomas declares that this so-called freedom "is truly slavery, and liberty only according to opinion." (*Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 183, a. 4) Elsewhere he has specified whose opinion he means: "that a man be not checked by the rein of reason from following concupiscence is liberty in the opinion of one who conceives of that pursuit as the *summum bonum*." (In Rom., c. 6, lect. 4).

In his commentary on the second book of *Sentences*, after enumerating freedom of choice, freedom from sin by grace, and freedom from unhappiness by glory as the three types of true liberty *simpliciter*, St. Thomas adds that the freedom of sin, in St. Paul's terminology "freedom from justice," is freedom only *secundum quid*, and therefore merits no place among the principal species of liberty. He admits, however, that it is similar to the freedom from sin by grace "by reason of likeness in mode, for just as sin *per se* retards one from good after the manner of a habit or a disposition, so also does justice retard one from evil." (*II Sent.*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 5, ad 2; ad 3)

use of material goods, in keeping with one's duties and social limitations.[43]

Even apart from whatever liberty the infusion of supernatural life may bring to men, these rights are essential to human nature and its normal development. From this liberty of the individual based on the natural moral law are to be clearly distinguished what are now usually termed " liberties," which flow from positive law and human agreements. These " liberties " may be further distinguished as either civil or political; the most important difference between the two is that civil rights have as their immediate end the welfare of the individual, while political rights are primarily directed to a public purpose.[44]

Civil rights are those which the individual has as a member of the community, " conferred by the State for the promotion of the common good and the welfare of the individual." [45] Among the rights guaranteed by positive legislation are usually found many already due to men as natural rights; these rights can then be termed " civil liberties " as well as natural rights. Already man's inalienable possession as gifts of God, these rights cannot be granted by the State; but the State can guarantee them. Civil rights properly so called, however, are those guaranteed in human law which are not already granted in the law of nature. The right to a trial by jury in criminal prosecutions is, in the United States, a civil right or liberty in this sense, inasmuch as it is not a right contained in the natural moral law. In the same manner, the political rights of the citizen, which " have to do mainly with voting and holding office " [46] are guarantees of positive rather than natural law.

Without prejudice to the natural law civil liberties may be, through constitutional processes, increased, restricted, or abro-

[43] *Christmas Message*, 1942.

[44] Ryan-Millar, *op. cit.*, pp. 276-281, " The Rights of the Citizen."

[45] J. A. Ryan, *The Catholic Church and the Citizen* (New York, 1928), p. 86.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

gated. The nullification of the right to vote, for example, " does not amount to a violation of any natural right. The elective franchise is not among the natural rights of the individual. It is created by the State for a civil purpose which might conceivably be attained, and in several countries has been attained, without universal suffrage." [47]

This distinction between the external personal freedom which is of natural right and the liberties granted the individual by human law is most clearly evidenced in regimes where slavery was a legally recognized institution. For slaves, even though they may not be in possession of the civil and political rights of citizens, have natural rights anterior to positive law which may not be denied. Human slavery is of the body, not of the soul.[48] No master may compel an obedience which would be sinful, or make demands contrary to fundamental human rights in matters that pertain to the nature of the body.[49] Slave or free, every man enjoys all the fundamental rights that spring from the principles of his human nature: " the right to life, to bodily integrity, to the necessary means of existence; the right

[47] *Ibid.* Cf. also *Declining Liberty and Other Papers* (New York, 1927), by the same author. On pp. 3-4 of this work he writes: " Modern public liberty is of three principal kinds: civil, economic, and political. The first affects the individual in the ordinary activities of life. It includes freedom of worship and expression, freedom to move about, to engage in a lawful occupation, to join with one's fellows in various forms of association, to make contracts, and to enjoy due process of law. Economic liberty falls under the head of civil liberty in so far as it concerns the right to labor, to follow a business, to acquire property. As economic opportunity, however, it constitutes a special and very important kind of liberty. In this sense, it means not merely absence of arbitrary restraint. It denotes the presence of effectual and reasonable opportunity. Obviously this is considerably more than mere freedom to enter economic contracts. For these may or may not be adequate to a reasonable kind of life. Finally, political liberty denotes the legal power of the citizen to take part in the processes of representative government. It covers chiefly membership in political associations, exercise of the electoral franchise, and holding public office." Cf. also Maritain, *The Rights of Man and Natural Law* (New York, 1943).

[48] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 104, a. 6, ad 1.

[49] *Ibid.*, a. 5, corp.

to tend towards his ultimate goal in the path marked out for him by God; the right of association and the right to possess and use property." [50]

As organized in society, and especially in the natural societies into which they are born, men have by natural right other indestructible freedoms. The family, imperfect society of the natural order, must have its own societal liberty to exercise all the rights due it by the natural law. The family is "a society limited indeed in numbers, but a true society, anterior to every kind of State or nation, with rights and duties of its own, totally independent of the commonwealth . . . governed by a power within itself, that is to say by the father." [51]

No regime can be just where the natural rights of domestic society are ignored or denied.[52] The right to marry, to beget children, and to educate them in accordance with divine law

[50] Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris.*

In the Declaration of Independence, the terms "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" include the rights spoken of above. "Happily for the United States, the doctrine of natural rights has a definite place in American political principles. It is specifically and strikingly recognized in the Declaration of Independence . . . Life and liberty include a very large part of the province of natural rights, while the pursuit of happiness implies the right to marry, to possess property and to enjoy some measure of economic opportunity. Liberty is a term of very wide comprehension comprising, in addition to freedom of movement and immunity from political oppression, freedom of education, religion, speech, and writing. The right to life includes immunity from all forms of arbitrary physical assault." Ryan, *The Catholic Church and the Citizen,* pp. 85-86.

[51] Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum.*

[52] "Provided the limits be not transgressed which are prescribed by the very purposes for which it exists, the family has, at least, equal rights with the State in the choice and pursuit of those things which are needful to its preservation and its just liberty. We say, at least equal rights; for since the domestic household is anterior both in idea and in fact to the gathering of men into a commonwealth, the former must necessarily have rights and duties which are prior to those of the latter, and which rest more immediately on nature. If the citizens of a State, if the families, on entering into association and fellowship, experienced at the hands of the State hindrance instead of help, and found their rights attacked instead of being protected, such association were rather to be repudiated than sought after." *Ibid.*

cannot be destroyed or interfered with; no government may subvert the natural rights of the family by intruding into the life of the home in such a way as to prevent the exercise of God-given liberties.[53] The free family must be at the base of any truly just, free, and fully human social order.

A second great societal freedom belongs to men collectively as members of the social order, the freedom of the State. As the perfect society in the natural order, the State has strict rights to liberty in its own sphere of action. It has an autonomy, due it by the natural moral law, which no other State can justly impede, and which the Church too must respect. Within the limits of its own legitimate activity, it is free and independent.[54]

[53] "The idea, then, that the civil government should, at its own discretion, penetrate and pervade the family and the household, is a great and pernicious mistake. True, if a family finds itself in great difficulty, utterly friendless, and without prospect of help, it is right that extreme necessity be met by public aid; for each family is a part of the commonwealth. In like manner, if within the walls of the household there occur grave disturbance of mutual rights, the public power must intervene to force each party to give the other what is due; for this is not to rob citizens of their rights, but justly and properly to safeguard and strengthen them. But the rulers of the State must go no further: nature bids them stop here." *Ibid.*

[54] Cf. the Encyclical *Immortale Dei* of Leo XIII (Nov. 1, 1885) for a summary of the Church's teaching on the State and the relationship between Church and State. The twentieth century finds the Church defending the rights of the State in such statements as the following from Pius XII:

"A fundamental condition of a just and honorable peace is to assure the right to life and independence of all nations, large and small, strong and weak. One nation's will to live must never be tantamount to a death sentence for another." *Christmas Message,* 1939.

"Within the limits of a new order founded on moral principles there is no room for the violation of the freedom, integrity, and security of other States, no matter what may be their territorial extension or their capacity for defense. If it is inevitable that the powerful States should, by reason of their greater potentialities and their power, play leading roles in the formation of economic groups comprising not only themselves but also smaller and weaker States as well, it is, nevertheless, indispensable that in the interests of the common good they, as all others, respect the rights of those smaller States to political freedom, to economic development and to the adequate protection, in the case of conflicts between

D. The Aristotelian notion of liberty.

Before turning to a discussion of Christian freedom, a brief treatment here of another approach to the nature of freedom will be helpful. We have already distinguished many types of liberty on the basis of the general notion of freedom as "immunity or exemption from servitude or subjection." For our purposes this mode of defining and dividing is an adequate method of arriving at fundamental concepts and of relating the freedom which is specifically Christian to other species of freedom. But this is a negative approach, as the very words "immunity" and "exemption" imply. There is another, and a more positive method, which should not be passed over, since it provides a complementary view of the concept of freedom. It is found in the Aristotelian definition of the free man as *causa sui*, "the man who exists for his own sake and not for another's."[55] St. Thomas has adopted the formula and uses it frequently.[56] "A slave differs from a free man in that the latter *has the disposal of himself*, as is stated in the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, whereas the slave is ordered to another. . . . That man is master of another as his slave when he assigns the one, whose master he is, to his own—namely, the master's use."[57] The definition of a slave given in this text corresponds to another Aristotelian concept, which terms a slave an *instrumentum animatum*, a living tool for the master's use and for his purposes.[58] Both liberty and slavery are thus described in terms of causality, slavery being inferior because it implies an inferiority in causality.

Though Aristotle's definition is given of a species of freedom, i. e., civil freedom, the universal applicability of the concept

nations, of that neutrality which is theirs according to the natural as well as international law." *Christmas Message*, 1941.

[55] *I Metaphysica*, c. 2.

[56] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 96, a. 4; *IV Cont. Gent.*, 22; *In Gal.*, c. 5, lect 3; etc.

[57] *Summa Theol.* I, q. 96, a. 4.

[58] I *Politica*, 2.

causa sui is evident. Self-causality or self-causation should be discoverable in some degree in all types of freedom.

St. Thomas has further elaborated this notion by pointing out that the free man is his own cause in two orders of causality, efficient and final.[59] (This is to be understood, of course, in the light of the general Thomistic doctrine concerning the divine causality as the first efficient cause of all free as well as necessary actions.) That man is free who acts as he himself chooses and for his own ends, rather than under the impulse of another's choice and for another's purpose.

This concept of freedom, properly understood and with the necessary qualifications that arise from the analogical character of such predication, is verified in the absolute and uncreated freedom of God Himself, Who acts as He wills, without interior or exterior constraint, and Who wills Himself as the first object of His free activity. The divine aseity is an infinite freedom which means supreme independence of all causation in the order of efficient and final causality. As uncaused, God is infinitely *causa sui*, uninfluenced in the exercise of His power or the direction of His activity by anything save His own wisdom and goodness.

The concept of freedom as self-dominion or self-causation may be applied to each of the members of the division of liberty given above. The dominion over personal activity is greater in the angelic order than in the human, because the natural powers of causality in angels are greater than those in men. When the natural powers of intellectual creatures are elevated by the influx of grace and the supernatural life, the increase in the powers of causation implies a corresponding development in the freedom and self-dominion of the creature. In other words, men and angels enjoy freedom, naturally and supernaturally, to the extent and degree they can act, under God, of themselves and for themselves. The perfection of

[59] *In V Pol.*, lect. 7 *In VI Pol.*, lect. 2; *In Gal.*, c. 5, lect. 3.

their liberty varies, according to the degree of causative power they receive. In men, the actualizing of spiritual powers by *good* habits (the intellectual, moral, and especially the theological virtues), by increasing causal power in intellect and will, enlarges the self-possession and self-mastery which are identical with human freedom. Every supernatural or natural influx of causal power, habitual or transient, means growth in freedom. The greater the creature's participation in God's infinite causality, the greater its freedom.

There is an analogy for this truth in the development of corporeal perfection. Just as the natural perfecting of the body in strength, health, and maturity makes the adult far freer than the child physically, by reason of the increase in exterior self-possession and self-dominion, so also a development of perfections that are specifically human, i. e., virtues of the intellect and the will, bring an intellectual and moral maturity which involves fuller interior freedom. Such perfections mean an increased sharing in the divine *aseitas*, God's absolute liberty and independence of all things outside Himself; they mean a growth in inwardness, self-possession, and autonomy, which tends to the perfect freedom of the sons of God.

Inasmuch as true freedom must be a reflection of the divine independence and perfection, error, which means intellectual imperfection, and sin, which means deficiency in the will, are excluded from any place in real freedom. Evil is in no sense a God-like perfection; as a privation of being, evil in itself is nothingness; in itself it has no being, no existence, no causality. To the extent that any creature is deficient and evil, it is not *causa sui*, since evil cannot be a cause except *per accidens*, i. e., through the good in which evil is found.[60] *Per se*, therefore, error and sin, the evils of the intellect and the will, are devoid of reality, and obstacles to causality and the freedom which flows from causality; in man they are impediments to action

[60] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 48, a. 1, ad 3.

" according to intellect and reason, and towards one's personal good according to intellect and reason "; thus they stand in the way of freedom since " man is said to be free especially when he acts according to intellect and reason, and towards a good of his own according to intellect and reason." [61]

Only perfections, therefore, can contribute to the essential inner freedom of intellectual creatures; only development in the orders of truth and of goodness can make the creature increasingly *causa sui*. In the hierarchy of these perfections, natural and supernatural, grace and charity stand in the highest place as the closest approximation to the divine *aseitas* of the inner life of the Holy Trinity; for grace and charity beget in the soul a voluntariness in the fulfillment of God's law through an affective union of the human will with the divine. The supernatural life of the soul gives men a supernatural self-dominion, in which the concept of the free man as *causa sui* is perfectly verified.

3. Christian Liberty.

A. Essence of Christian Liberty.

We have already indicated the need of distinguishing between man's liberty in the natural order and his supernatural liberty by grace. To both members of that distinction we must add the further sub-distinction between internal and external freedom. For the nature of man as a composite of matter and spirit demands an extension of liberty, be it the freedom of nature or of grace, into the external life of mankind.

The interior perfecting of the human soul, mind, and will by habitual grace and its accompanying virtues and gifts is the essential Christian freedom. It is

> not the creation of human power and will, but the birthright of the Christian as child of God, reborn in Christ and vivified by the Spirit. It is therefore a much more fundamental thing than what we commonly understand by religious freedom. In modern times

[61] *In V Pol., lect. 7.*

Christian freedom has usually been considered in reference either to the freedom of the individual conscience against external compulsion or to the freedom of the Christian community—the Church —against the State. But the first freedom from which these are derivative and dependent is the freedom of the spirit—the new creation which changes man's nature and liberates him from the state of psychological and moral bondage to the world and the forces that rule the world.[62]

The purpose of that freedom is the sanctification and eventual salvation of the human person, accomplished by the elevation of man to a state of divine sonship through the infusion of a supernatural life which is a created participation in the divine nature. There are two stages in this life of supernatural liberty: the first, the life of grace on earth; the second, the life of glory in Heaven.

St. Augustine describes the unfolding of this higher freedom:

> The first stage of liberty is to be free from crimes . . . When a man has begun to be free from these (and every Christian ought to be so), he begins to raise his head to liberty; but that is liberty begun, not completed . . . In part liberty, in part bondage; not yet pure, not yet full liberty, because not yet eternity . . . In what measure we serve God we are free; in what measure we serve the law of sin, we are still in bondage. . . . When shall it be a full and perfect liberty? When enmities are no more; when death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed.[63]

In his commentary on the same verses in St. John's Gospel which inspired the above statement of St. Augustine, St. Thomas systematizes, with characteristic precision, the Augustinian teaching, and amplifies it:

> To be a disciple of Christ is a privilege of great dignity . . . Yet to know the truth is still greater, since that is the goal of a disciple. This too the Lord gives believers: therefore does He say: *You shall know the truth*, namely (a) of the doctrine I teach; . . .

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[62] C. Dawson, "Christian Freedom," *The Dublin Review*, CVI (July, 1942), pp. 5-6.

[63] *Super Joannem*, tract 41.

(b) of the grace I impart; . . . (c) of the eternity in which I abide . . . But the greatest [privilege] of all is the gaining of that liberty which the knowledge of the truth begets in those who believe; therefore He says: *And the truth shall make you free* . . . And this freedom is from three things: for the truth of Christ's doctrine will free us from the error of falsehood; . . . the truth of His grace, from the bondage of sin; . . . the truth of His eternity, from corruption . . . True and spiritual liberty . . . is the liberty of grace, which is 'to be free from crimes.' This is imperfect . . . The liberty of glory is perfect and full . . . because there will be nothing inclining us to evil, nothing oppressing us, for there will be freedom from sin and from punishment.[64]

It is evident from these descriptions of Christian liberty that there are involved in it two elements: a deliverance from sin and all sin implies, and a movement towards God. As sin itself implies an aversion from God as well as a conversion to creatures, so the spiritual liberation of the Christian soul involves a retreat from evil and an advance to good; an escape from sin's dominion and a flight to God's.

The reality of the sinner's slavery is affirmed in the words of Christ: "Every one who commits sin is a slave of sin."[65] The soul in this bondage serves also whatever incites to sin, that is, the world, the devil, and the flesh. But the world and the devil make use principally of the flesh and its desires to tempt men and deepen their slavery. Before the reign of grace in the soul the flesh rules the spirit, the disorderly inclinations of the sensual appetite impelling the soul to act contrary to the rule of reason.[66] Only when strengthened by grace can the soul assert its due dominion over the body. For the disorder arises from the loss of grace by the sin of Adam, and only the grace of the new Adam can restore the primitive order in the appetites of men.

This liberation from the dominion of sin includes also deliverance from subjection to the devil. By original sin and grave

[64] *In Joann.*, c. 8, lect. 4. [65] John 8:24. [66] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 91, a. 6.

personal sin men become slaves of the devil. Satan is an invisible master to whose despotism men condemn themselves by mortal sin [67] but from whom they cannot in like manner voluntarily release themselves. The price of ransom from the double slavery to sin and the devil was paid for mankind in the Passion of Christ, Who alone can apply the grace of freedom to the enslaved. No purely human power can aid them.[68]

Satan can lord it over sinners only because God in His justice permits him to do so.[69] It is for this reason that the devil is termed by St. Paul "the god of this world," [70] God's wisdom and justice allowing worldlings to serve him.[71] As Christ is actually Head of all those justified by His grace, so Satan is head of all in the state of sin; [72] sinners are the devil's sons, as the just are the sons of God.[73]

Thus it is clear that man is always in subjection, whether he enjoys the true freedom of the sons of God, or the freedom from justice of followers of Satan. Human liberty must neces-

[67] *Ibid.*, q. 80, a. 4, ad 2.

[68] C. Dawson, "Christian Freedom," p. 2: "The Gospel of Christ was essentially the good news of the coming of the Kingdom, but at the same time it raised the whole idea of redemption and deliverance to a new plane. It was no longer a question of national deliverance by the establishment of a social or political theocracy. It was the reversal of a universal cosmic process which had reduced the whole human race to a state of slavery. It was a moral deliverance, but it was also much more than that. We are so accustomed to the traditional Christian terminology of sin and redemption that we are apt to forget what these words meant to the early Christians. For to them sin was not simply unethical behaviour, it was a real state of slavery to powers outside humanity and stronger than man, the spiritual forces of evil which were the rulers of this dark age. Modern writers . . . have described almost precisely the same conceptions and the same psychological attitude among converts from paganism today."

[69] *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 48, a. 4, ad 2.

[70] II Cor. 4 : 4.

[71] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 65, a. 1.

[72] *Ibid.*, III, q. 8, a. 1; a. 7. It should be noted, however, that the devil's influence upon sinners is exterior only, and not interior like the influence of Christ the Head upon His Mystical Body.

[73] *Ibid.*, I, q. 114, a. 3, ad 2.

sarily bow under one yoke or the other; there is no escaping the subordinate condition of our nature.

Negatively, then, the interior freedom of the Christian soul means liberation from the bondage of sin and Satan. Positively, it means freedom to be a child of God and a citizen of heaven, and opportunity to grow in that sonship and citizenship. The infusion of habitual grace begins a divine life in the soul and initiates the restoration of the original harmony and liberty that reigned in Adam before the fall.

Habitual grace generates in the soul the status of Christian freedom; it is the *esse* of spiritual liberty. This life of freedom bursts into action through the virtues and gifts which flow into the powers of the soul from grace, but especially through the virtue of charity which is rooted in the will, the power where natural liberty resides. It is charity above all which gives the soul the *agere* of Christian freedom. Thus the infusion of grace means the birth of supernatural liberty; the infusion of charity, its growth and perfection.

Charity gives the will a spontaneity and pleasure in virtuous activity which no natural perfection can impart to the powers of man. "No virtue has so great an inclination to its act as charity, nor does any operate with such delight."[74] This freedom of charity is transmitted to all the other powers of the soul whose acts is commands; it circulates in the whole man. By fixing the will upon its true last end, charity leaves freedom of choice unimpeded in the selection of those objects which are *ad finem*. Thus it gives adequate direction, not from outside the will but from within, to the act of election which is the proper act of free will.[75] More than that, it is a stimulus to

[74] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 23, a. 2, corp.

[75] "The free-will is not a distinct power from the will. Yet charity is not in the will considered as free-will, the act of which is to choose. For choice is of things directed to the end, whereas the will is of the end itself. Hence charity, whose object is the last end, should be described as residing in the will rather than in the free-will." *Ibid.*, q. 24, a. 1, ad 3.

activity which will bring about the growth of love and supernatural liberty. For the degrees of charity are the degrees of Christian freedom.

B. Degrees of Christian Liberty.

Though the natural freedom of the human will does not admit, *per se*, of degrees, there are gradations in the perfection of supernatural liberty.[76] "Free will, as freedom from compulsion, does not admit of the more and the less; but when freedom from sin and from unhappiness are taken into account, it is said to be freer in one state than in another."[77] In this life the degrees of Christian freedom are the degrees of charity. Progress in the love of God and neighbor brings an increase in freedom from sin in this life, and the degree of charity possessed at death determines the degree of perfection in the liberty of glory. The three stages of Christian perfection, the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways, are stages in the development here on earth of the liberty of the Christian soul.[78] In this life no limit can be set to the increase of spiritual liberty.[79]

Thus there is no uniform level of spiritual liberty among Christians in the state of grace. Freedom in the pursuit of goodness and the search for God will not be identical for the prodigal newly restored to friendship with God, and for the saint who has never lost his baptismal innocence. Among sinners too, there is a corresponding lack of uniformity in the measure of their spiritual enslavement; since there is variation in degree in vice as well as in virtue, there are depths of bondage to which not every evildoer will descend, just as there are heights of liberty none but saints will scale.[80] The stronger the

[76] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 59, a. 3, ad 3.

[77] *De Ver.*, q. 24, a. 10, ad 7.

[78] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 183, a. 4, corp.; cf. also *ibid.*, ad 1; *II Sent.*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 4.

[79] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 24, a. 7.

[80] *II Sent.*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 4: "The free will is so called from the fact that it

disposition to sin, the deeper the soul's enslavement; yet no such impulse, no matter how deeply rooted, will destroy the will's innate freedom of choice, or of itself eliminate the soul's responsibility for sinful action.[81]

C. Extent of Christian Liberty.

Though the supernatural Christian freedom of which we have been speaking is essentially interior, rooted in the soul and its faculties, its influence is not limited to the interior life and activity of man. Man, as we have noted, is a unit composed of matter and spirit, and it is the whole composite that is sanctified by divine grace; it is the whole man who is freed by grace from the bondage of sin. Consequently, this liberty of grace must be externalized in the visible and earthly life of the Christian; it must overflow into his contact with men and society.

The natural liberty of free choice does not remain locked in the human heart in such a way as to have no exterior manifestation and influence; so also the supernatural freedom of the Christian soul must have its proper externalization. Perhaps a better place to find an analogy to the external Christian freedom is in the supernatural term of Christian liberty, the life of glory, rather than in the natural freedom of the will which it perfects. In the life of glory, the perfect happiness and complete liberty of the sons of God will, after the general Resurrection, overflow into their bodies, *per redundantiam*, as

cannot be forced. But force . . . is of two kinds: one compelling, and the other, inducing or impelling. Now it is natural to, and of the essence of, the free will, not to be completely (*sufficienter*) constrained by any compelling force, and this belongs to it whatever be its state; accordingly, such liberty as this is not increased or lessened *per se*, but only *per accidens*. . . . But that liberty which is from impulses or dispositive causes which incline the will in one direction rather than another, is increased and lessened, acquired and lost; this type of liberty, then, is also enlarged or diminished *per se* in man according to the different states in which he is found."

[81] *Ibid.*, ad 4.

St. Thomas says.[82] Since the life of grace and faith on earth is the seed of the life of glory, we should expect a redundance here on earth also of their inner blessedness and freedom in the outer life of Christians, to whatever extent that overflow of the invisible into the visible may be possible. Does not the same Apostle who wrote "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom," tell us also that the bodies of true Christians are the temples of the Holy Spirit? [83]

In any case, even apart from these considerations, it is clear that the influence of the body upon the soul demands that certain essential external requirements be provided to help guarantee the survival and development of the inner Christian liberty. From either point of view, i. e., the soul's influence upon the body, or the body's upon the soul, the necessity for an outward realization of Christian freedom is evident.[84] We may speak of these external manifestations of Christian freedom as Christian liberty *per redundantiam vel per participationem*, the internal emancipation by grace from the slavery of sin constituting Christian freedom *per essentiam*. These outward expressions of the inward Christian life are not necessary, absolutely speaking, *ad esse* but *ad bene esse* of the Christian soul and the liberty of the sons of God.

What external liberty or liberties flow from the inner Christian liberty as its normal expression, or as an essential condition for its existence and enrichment? In general, the answer will be: every exterior freedom needed to be and to live as a Christian.[85] Specifically, those external liberties will include all

[82] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 4, a. 5; a. 6. [83] II Cor. 3 : 17; I Cor. 6 : 19.

[84] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 4, a. 5-8, for St. Thomas's doctrine on the relationship between body and soul in the development of the life of grace, as well as a discussion of the need of external goods and of association with other men in the pursuit of interior perfection.

[85] "For Christian life to develop it must have recourse to external and sensible means; . . . the Church, being a society of men, cannot exist or develop if it does not enjoy liberty of action, and . . . its members have the right to find in civil society the possibility of living according to their conscience." Pius XI, *Firmissi-*

that freedom outlined above which belongs to all men by natural right either as individuals or as organized in society. In a word, all the natural freedoms due to men individually and collectively are due them *a fortiori* as Christians; the inner "freedom wherewith Christ has made us free" [86] gives supernatural rights to any outer expression the legitimate exercise of Christian freedom demands. Not that Christians must necessarily have *more* external rights and freedoms than non-Christians, but rather that Christians have more reason for the same rights, i.e., they have the same natural rights as all others *a fortiori*. In other words, the freedoms guaranteed the race by the natural law have been christened by the Liberator of mankind, and consecrated to the fulfillment of higher duties than the natural law imposes. The natural freedoms thus baptized may rightly be called Christian, for when the sons of Adam achieve by grace the nobler status of sons of God, both the interior freedom of choice and the exterior liberties due the free creature are elevated to a higher plane, perfected by becoming Christian.[87]

The chief external manifestation of the Christian's freedom is a true freedom of conscience which Leo XIII has expressly termed "Christian liberty." It is a liberty of conscience which means that

> every man in the State may follow the will of God and, from a consciousness of duty and free from every obstacle, obey His

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mam Constantiam (*Nos es Muy*) Apostolic Letter on the Religious Situation in Mexico.

[86] Gal. 4:31.

[87] Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris*: "Man has a spiritual and immortal soul. He is a person, marvelously endowed by his Creator with gifts of body and mind. . . . God alone is his last end, in this life and the next. By sanctifying grace He is raised to the dignity of a son of God, and incorporated into the Kingdom of God in the Mystical Body of Christ. In consequence he has been endowed with many and varied prerogatives: the right to life, to bodily integrity, to the necessary means of existence; the right to tend to his ultimate goal in the path marked out for him by God; the right of association and the right to possess and use property."

commands. This, indeed, is true liberty, a liberty worthy of the sons of God, which nobly maintains the dignity of man, and is stronger than all violence or wrong—a liberty which the Church has always desired and held most dear. This is the kind of liberty the Apostles claimed for themselves with intrepid constancy, which the Apologists of Christianity confirmed by their writings, and which the martyrs in vast numbers consecrated by their blood. And deservedly so; for this Christian liberty bears witness to the absolute and most just dominion of God over man, and to the chief and supreme duty of man towards God.[88]

Thus the freedom of conscience which is man's right by natural law is christianized in the freedom of the baptized to follow Christ without let or hindrance from others. In rendering to God what is God's according to the dictates of a Christion conscience, he is not to be deterred by the secular authority of the State or by any other institution. "The believer has an inalienable right to profess his faith and put it into practice in the manner suited to him. . . . Laws that suppress or make this profession and practice difficult contradict the natural law." [89]

It is to be noted here, however, that in the exercise of her authority the Church cannot violate the Christian liberty of her members, since her judgments and commands cannot fail to be a protection and guide for Christian freedom. In other words, the State can interfere with the exercise of Christian liberty; the Church cannot, either by her doctrinal guidance of the human mind, or by her disciplinary measures.[90]

[88] *Libertas Praestantissimum.*

[89] Pius XI, *Mit brennender Sorge.*

[90] The eighteenth proposition of the Synod of Pistoia was condemned by Pius VI as "false, temerarious, scandalous, pernicious, offensive to pious ears, injurious to the Church and to the Spirit of God, by which she is governed, at least erroneous," because the doctrine it sets forth "subjects to scrutiny the discipline established and approved by the Church, as if the Church could establish a useless discipline or one which would be too onerous for Christian liberty to bear." (Denz. 1578)

After referring to this condemnation in *Testem Benevolentiae* (to Cardinal

Freedom to become and to remain a Christian, to receive a Christian education, to profess the Christian faith in private and in public without fear of penalty—all these rights are implied in true liberty of conscience.[91] This basic freedom of the Christian, which can appeal to a higher law in the face of every secular attempt to impede or destroy the supernatural liberty of the soul, becomes a safeguard of other fundamental human freedoms. Leo XIII has pointed out that obedience to God rather than men in cases where human power exceeds itself by demanding what is contrary to the eternal law of God, results in the erection of an effective defense against tyranny. "The authority in the State will not have all its own way, but the interests and rights of all will be safeguarded—the rights of individuals, of domestic society, and of all the members of

Gibbons, Jan. 22, 1899), Leo XIII protests against those who "judge that a certain liberty ought to be introduced into the Church, so that, limiting the exercise and vigilance of its powers, each one of the faithful may act more freely in pursuance of his own natural bent and capacity. They affirm, namely, that this is called for in order to imitate that liberty which, though quite recently introduced, is now the law and foundation of almost every civil community. On that point we have spoken very much at length [in the Encyclical *Immortale Dei*] . . . We have also shown the difference between the Church, which is of divine right, and all other associations, which subsist by the free will of men. It is of importance, therefore, to note particularly an opinion which is adduced as a sort of argument to urge the granting of such liberty to Catholics. For they say, in speaking of the infallible teaching of the Roman Pontiff, that after the solemn decision formulated in the Vatican Council, there is no more need of solicitude in that regard, and, because of its now being out of dispute, a wider field of thought and action is thrown open to individuals. A preposterous method of arguing, surely. For if anything is suggested by the infallible teaching of the Church, it is certainly that no one should wish to withdraw from it; nay, that all should strive to be thoroughly imbued with and be guided by its spirit, so as to be the more easily preserved from any private error whatsoever."

[91] The religious freedom of the Christian implies also "the right to a reasonable liberty in the choice of a state of life and fulfillment of a true vocation; a personal right, this last, if there ever was one, belonging to the spirit and sublime when the higher imprescriptible rights of God and the Church meet, as in the choice and fulfillment of the priestly and religious vocations." Pius XII, in his Pentecost Radio Broadcast, June 1, 1941.

the commonwealth. All are thus free to live according to law and right reason; and in this . . . true liberty really consists." [92]

Is man's natural right to freedom of conscience the only human freedom which is christened by dedication to the service of Christ? Or may we rightly extend the term Christian also to other rights and liberties Christians possess? It seems clear from the Church's use of the term Christian liberty that we need not restrict the phrase either to the inner freedom of the soul by grace or to the freedom of conscience treated above. Leo XIII, for example, uses it to designate civil freedom when he says: "Wherever Christian morality and laws are in high repute, wherever religion has so developed men that they observe justice and hold human dignity in honor, wherever there has spread far and wide the spirit of fraternal love which Christ has taught us, there neither slavery nor cruelty nor barbarism can remain; but there a high morality flourishes, and a Christian liberty held high in civil esteem." [93] In a prayer for the Roman Emperor in the Missal, unused since 1804, the Church employed the term to designate the external freedom of the Christian people: "Accept, O Lord, the prayers and offerings of Thy Church for the safety of Thy suppliant servant; and for the protection of faithful nations work the ancient marvels of Thy power; that, the enemies of peace overcome, Christian liberty may serve Thee in security." [94] Elsewhere we find the equivalent phrase "evangelical liberty" designating external freedom in the political order.[95]

It is safe to assert then that in the mind of the Church Christian liberty, though principally and primarily a freedom of the spirit, must also be in its fulness a freedom of the flesh;

[92] *Libertas Praestantissimum.*

[93] Leo XIII, Letter *Ecclesiae Catholicae* (Nov. 20, 1890), to Cardinal Lavigerie. *Lettres Apostoliques de S. S. Leon XIII*, II, 298-303.

[94] *Orationes diversae, 5.*

[95] Leo XIII, *In Plurimis* (May 5, 1888): "Towards the end of the fifteenth century . . . the base stain of slavery had been nearly blotted out from among Christian nations, and states were anxious to stand firmly in evangelical liberty."

there must be an exterior Christian liberty flowing forth from the intangible inner life of supernatural freedom.

The economic liberty due to man as a natural right, so ably defended by Leo XIII and Pius XI in their social encyclicals, is a truly Christian freedom in a social order where property is dedicated to Christian aims and its use is regulated by Christian ideals. The false teachings which would concentrate wealth under the control of the State or of a powerful faction within the State are as opposed to revealed doctrine as they are to reason. In other words, not only man's natural dignity and development in the human order but his supernatural dignity and development as well require economic security and freedom, security and freedom which we may justly term Christian.[96]

Any social structure which defrauds men of their human and Christian rights to property is evil, since it can thus " lay upon the masses of the poor a yoke little better than slavery itself." [97] In the mind of the Church an equitable distribution of the world's wealth must be a necessary externalization of mankind's free service of Christ, as well as a necessary condition for the inner life of Christian freedom.[98]

[96] We have been unable to find any official statement of the Church which speaks directly of *economic* liberty as Christian liberty (though it may be obliquely referred to in the citations given above from Leo XIII). We can see no reason why the economic freedom which belongs to man as man cannot be regarded as a Christian freedom when elevated by dedication to a supernatural end. Recognition of the Christian character of economic freedom is to be found in the stress laid by the Popes of recent years on the need of a just and *Christian* social order to enable men to fulfill their obligations as Christians. The Church's defense of property as an essential human liberty is based on fundamental Christian teaching concerning the nature of man, society, and material goods. The Church proclaims as a divine demand that society be so organized as to provide every man with such external means as will facilitate the practice of Christian virtue. If the natural right to serve God according to His will is for Christians in the professing of their faith *Christian liberty*, so also the natural right to the use of private possessions is deserving of the name Christian when the right is exercised for Christian aims.

[97] Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum.*

[98] " Our immortal predecessor Leo XIII, in his famous Encyclical *Rerum*

While it is true that religious freedom and an economic liberty essential to the practice of virtue are the primary external requisites for the full inner life of Christian freedom, it remains true also that the survival and enlargement of supernatural life do not require civil or political liberty as a *sine qua non*. It is entirely possible for Christians to lead lives of high sanctity in the condition of civil servitude, and the history of the progress of Christianity among the slaves of the Roman Empire is concrete proof of that possibility. Yet it belongs to Christians to be free externally, and it is solidly established that civil and political liberty have always been furthered wherever the Church's influence has penetrated. Leo XIII had no hesitation in saying, "The powerful influence of the Church

Novarum, has already established the principle that for every honest economic and social order there must be laid down as its basic foundation the right to private property . . . This private property is in a special manner the natural fruit of labor, the produce of an intense activity on the part of the man who acquires it, through his active will, to ensure and improve his own person, his own living conditions and those of his family, to create for himself and for those dear to him a field in which they may rightly enjoy not only economic freedom but also political, cultural, and religious freedom. The Christian conscience cannot admit as just a social order which either denies in principle or renders impossible or nugatory in practice the natural right to property. . . .

"On the one side we see immense riches dominating public and private economic life, and often even civic life; and on the other, the countless numbers of those who, deprived of every direct or indirect security of livelihood, take no proper interest in the true and higher value of the spirit, abandon their aspirations to genuine freedom, and throw themselves at the feet of any political party, slaves to whomsoever promises them in some way bread and security. Experience shows what tyranny, under such circumstances, human nature is capable of even in our own time.

"In defending, therefore, the principle of private property, the Church pursues a high ethico-social purpose . . . The Church aims . . . at securing that the institution of private property be such as it should be according to the designs of God's wisdom and the disposition of the elements in the social order—a necessary presupposition to human initiative, an incentive to work to the advantage of life's purpose here and hereafter, and *an instrument of the liberty and dignity of man*, created in the likeness of God, Who from the beginning assigned to him for his benefit dominion over material things." Pius XII, Radio Message on the Fifth Anniversary of World War II, Sept. 1, 1944. (Italics ours.)

has ever been manifested in the custody and protection of the civil and political liberty of the people . . . It is sufficient to recall the fact that slavery, that old reproach of the heathen nations, was mainly abolished by the beneficent efforts of the Church." [99]

The Christian religion was not created to bring men the temporal blessings of civil and political freedom, but a spiritual emancipation so far superior that St. Thomas speaks of lesser liberties as " vain " in comparison.[100] But the overflow of that deliverance from the bondage of sin by Christian doctrine and discipline must normally result in a true exteriorization of Christian freedom in civil and political life.[101]

The liberating grace of Christ sanctifies not only the individual life of man but also his societal life. Just as man's natural personal freedoms are christianized and elevated by the influence of the supernatural, so are the race's societal liberties consecrated, in a Christian social order, to divine service. The freedoms of both the family and the State become Christian when they serve Christian purposes.

As far as the family is concerned, this elevation of natural

[99] *Libertas Praestantissimum.* Cf. Acton, *op. cit.*, p. 203: " The Church has succeeded in producing the kind of liberty she exacts for her children only in those States which she has herself created or transformed. Real freedom has been known in no State that did not pass through her medieval action. The history of the Middle Ages is the history of the gradual emancipation of man from every species of servitude, in proportion as the influence of religion became more penetrating and more universal. The Church could never abandon that principle of liberty by which she conquered pagan Rome. The history of the last three centuries exhibits the gradual revival of declining slavery, which appears under new forms of oppression as the authority of religion has decreased. The efforts of deliverance have been violent and reactionary, the progress of dependence sure and inevitable." Cf. also J. Balmes, *European Civilization* (New York, 1850) pp. 90-115.

[100] *In Joann.*, c. 8, lect. 4. St. Thomas is not condemning temporal freedom from the condition of slavery as he condemns sinful freedom, terming it " perverse "; civil freedom is not evil, but rather, unimportant, especially when viewed *sub specie aeternitatis* and compared to the spiritual liberty of grace and glory.

[101] E. Quinn, " Free Will in the Modern World," *Blackfriars*, XXI (Aug., 1940), pp. 459-464.

rights and consecration of natural liberties has been accomplished by Christ Himself directly through His institution of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Here, in directly christianizing the natural contract of matrimony, Christ sacramentalizes the whole social structure of which the Christian family is the cell. For the sacramental nature of Christian marriage benefits not only the family itself and the Church, but the State as well. The State participates in the supernatural influences that perfect the natural elements of civil society when Christ's power penetrates and permeates the political order through the family. For the spiritual emancipation of the Christian home as well as of the individuals who form the family cannot fail to have a spiritual influence upon the body politic and contribute to the advancement of purely secular freedoms.

The Church, likewise, has of divine right an inalienable liberty: freedom to exist, to preach the Gospel, to administer the Sacraments, to rule her members with executive, legislative, and judicial power. As the State is supreme and independent, by natural right, in temporal affairs, so also the Church is supreme and independent in matters that concern men's spiritual life, and is subject to no authority but that of God Himself. "The Church, founded by Christ as a perfect society, has a natural and inalienable right to perfect freedom and immunity from the power of the state; . . . in fulfilling the task committed to her of teaching, ruling, and guiding to eternal bliss those who belong to the Kingdom of Christ, she cannot be subject to any external power."[102] From the very first days of her existence, the Church has always claimed that freedom and boldly exercised it to the fullest possible extent despite every attempt at suppression and persecution.

[102] Pius XI, *Quas Primas* (Encyclical on the Kingship of Christ, Dec. 11, 1925).

Chapter II

CAUSES OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

Among the causes to be discussed, the first three, i. e., the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ the God-Man, and the Catholic Church, are in the strictest sense causes external to the freedom of the Christian soul and produce Christian liberty as efficient causes. Though they are inseparable from true liberty of soul, they are not *formal* elements integrated in the structure of Christian freedom.

But faith, charity, and all the other virtues, infused and acquired, which are treated here as agents in the liberation of the Christian, are, from another viewpoint, essential elements *formally* constituting Christian liberty.[103] In other words, they have the character of formal cause as well as efficient causality in relation to Christian freedom. The acquired and infused virtues, as human or divine perfections of the potencies they determine, are *forms*, accidental forms; as operative habits, however, ordered to acts [104] whereby Christian freedom may be developed, they are *agents* in the increase of freedom. It is in this latter sense that we speak of them here; we have previously considered the virtues in so far as they are formal constituents of Christian liberty.[105]

[103] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 23, a. 8, ad 3.

[104] *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 49, a. 3.

[105] Habitual grace is essentially formal in its causality in relation to Christian freedom. "Grace, as a quality, is said to act upon the soul not after the manner of an efficient cause, but after the manner of a formal cause, as whiteness makes a thing white." (I-II, q. 110, a. 2, ad 1.) It is a form divinizing the essence of the human soul. In so far as it operates, mediately, through the supernatural habits which flow from it into the powers of the soul, habitual grace can be considered as active also in the order of efficient causality. (Cf. I-II, q. 110, a. 4, ad 1; ad 2.)

Law is an efficient cause of freedom in its Christian fulness because it is an *imperium*, an impulse to action. The New Law, however, in the sense that it is identified with charity, is a formal element (or rather, *the* formal element) in Christian freedom; it has then whatever is to be attributed to charity in the order of efficient causality.

Briefly, the following section deals with the chief causes of Christian liberty not only in its genesis but also in its development and perfection. From this viewpoint it is possible to consider the formal elements in Christian freedom as also operative, effectively, in the increase of that freedom.

1. *The Holy Trinity*

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom," [106] is the formula of St. Paul for the liberty of the Christian.[107] The Holy Trinity is the first cause of all liberty of free creatures whether that liberty be potential, actual, or habitual, whether it be the natural freedom of the will, or the supernatural freedom of grace and glory, whether it be purely internal or manifested externally.[108] But the supernatural liberation of man, though an operation *ad extra* of the divine nature and therefore a work of the three persons, is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, since it is essentially a divine labor of love and sanctification.[109] It

In treating of the Christian virtues, therefore, we are treating by implication of the efficiency of grace, which is the principle of supernatural action through the medium of the virtues.

[106] II Cor. 3: 17.

[107] Though St. Thomas admits in his commentary on this text that "Lord" may be interpreted as referring directly to Christ, and "spirit" may be understood as relating to the New Law, the spiritual law of Christ, he also gives the interpretation which refers "Spirit" to the Third Person. See *In II ad Cor.*, cap. 3, lect 3.

In other places St. Thomas consistently interprets this text as referring to the Holy Ghost as, e.g., *IV Cont. Gent.*, cap. 22.

[108] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 83, a. 1, ad 3.

[109] *Ibid.*, q. 39, a. 7; a. 8.

is also a supereminent expression of the divine liberty of the Holy Ghost, " who divides to everyone according as He will." [110]

When St. Paul writes elsewhere, " the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us," [111] he is indicating from another viewpoint the role of the Holy Ghost in our spiritual liberation, since the love He infuses is chief among the interior causes of our Christian freedom. All the created principles of this true liberty are products of the uncreated liberty and love of the Holy Spirit: the Sacred Humanity of Christ; the Church; revelation, including both the Old and the New Law; grace and the infused virtues and gifts; and the glory of the elect.

Without the Holy Spirit there can be no liberty in creation except the perverse liberty of sin. Without God the undeveloped potentiality of created liberty tends to nothingness, to that privation of due being, order, and goodness, which is the essence of sin. Sin is freedom perverted, needing no uncreated freedom as its cause, because it is an absence of reality and a lack of being. God need not be, in fact cannot be, the cause of this moral deficiency, which arises from a creature's abuse of freedom of choice; the creature alone is responsible.[112]

2. *Jesus Christ*

" If therefore the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." [113] Christ reveals in these words His own part in the work of liberation which is elsewhere in the Scriptures appropriated to the Holy Spirit. The liberty given by the Holy Ghost is the same as " the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free." [114] The Son and the Spirit whom He sent to sanctify us are inseparable in the work of freeing the souls of men from error and sin.

[110] I Cor. 12: 11. Cf. also *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 24, a. 3.
[111] Rom. 5: 5.
[112] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 49, a. 2.
[113] John 8: 36.
[114] Galatians 4: 31.

As God, Christ has, of course, the primary causality in the liberating of souls, a causality equal to, and identical with, that of the Father and the Holy Spirit. As Man, however, our divine Saviour has a special and unique part to play in the creation of supernatural freedom. Our freedom from spiritual bondage flows from His Sacred Humanity as well as from His Divinity. That is why our freedom is Christian in the full meaning of that term—it comes from Christ and through Christ both as God and as Man. As our Teacher, the God-Man gives us the truth necessary for humanity's intellectual liberation; as our Redeemer, He has won and He confers upon us the grace necessary for moral freedom. "Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." [115] And *only* from Christ can the freedom which grace and truth involve be obtained. There is no other source. "Christ *alone* can drive out the dreadful spirits of error and sin, which have subjected mankind to a tyrannical and degrading servitude . . . Christ *alone*, Who has rescued us from the sad slavery of sin, can point out the way to a noble, controlled liberty supported by genuine righteousness and a moral sense." [116]

The causal relation of the Humanity of Christ to that freedom He infuses into souls is so essential and so intimate that our spiritual liberty could not be more accurately described than by the name Christian. As Man, He is more than an efficient principle of supernatural freedom. In His human nature He is its exemplary, meritorious and instrumental cause. In these three ways is our liberty specifically Christian.[117]

Christ is the Exemplar of our liberty because He is *the* free Man, the Model to whose sinless image and likeness all men who are truly free must be conformed. In the order of formal causality Christ is the pattern of the supernatural liberty which the activity of the Spirit aims to reproduce in

[115] John 1: 17.
[116] Pius XII, *Christmas Message*, 1943. (Italics ours.)
[117] *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 8, a. 1, corp; ad 1.

our lives. All the principles which must co-exist and cooperate in the emancipation of the human soul were in His soul pre-eminently in all their fulness: the indwelling Spirit and His gifts; grace, truth, charity. Before His Resurrection Christ was our divinely human Prototype for that freedom from sin which is the ultimate in liberty for this life; after His Resurrection, His glorified Body no longer subject to suffering, He was, and is, the Original of that fulness of liberty which includes deliverance from misery as well as sin. Thus all true freedom of grace and glory is Christian not only in the sense that it is an effect of Christ's activity, but also as a reflection of His perfect human life.

It would surely be enlightening to examine carefully the external conditions under which the human liberty of Christ was exercised, conditions which, from a purely human and natural standpoint, would have seemed most undesirable, but were yet chosen deliberately by the divine liberty and embraced freely by the human will of Christ. Influencing this choice must have been Christ's intention of emphasizing the absolute value of the inner freedom of grace in contrast to the relative unimportance of the external liberties which sense-bound humanity treasures inordinately; and of teaching that the highest interior liberty can be realized, with divine help, under the most unfavorable natural circumstances, economic, political, or social. Christ's family was poor;[118] His social status was

[118] "Undoubtedly the poverty of the stable in Bethlehem is a condition which He chose for Himself only, and it does not therefore imply any condemnation of the economic life as far as it is necessary for the physical or natural development and perfection of man. But that poverty of the Lord and Creator of the world, deliberately willed by Him, a poverty which will accompany Him in the workshop of Nazareth and throughout His public life, signifies and portrays the command and the dominance He had over material things. And thus it shows with striking efficacy the natural and essential subjection of material goods to the life of the spirit and to a higher cultural, moral and religious perfection which is necessary for man endowed with reason. Those who looked for the salvation of society from the machinery of the world economic market have remained thus disillusioned because they had become not the lords and masters, but the slaves, of material

inferior, despite the royal lineage of His Mother; His country was subjugated and paid tribute to Rome. We do not mean to say that by His choice for His own earthly life Our Lord would teach us that such conditions are in themselves desirable and to be cultivated for spiritual purposes. But in a world which overestimates the importance of externals and earthly values He found it useful for His spiritual mission to minimize these things.

In a second way is the freedom of mankind through grace and glory Christian, in as much as it comes to us from Christ by way of merit and satisfaction.[119] By His human activity and especially by His Passion and Death, Christ earned for us freedom from sin and from the tyranny of Satan. Our ransom was purchased by His sufferings, which had infinite value because of Christ's Divine Personality, to which the actions of His Humanity are attributed. Thus Christ offered an infinite reparation in recompense for the infinite insult offered to the majesty of the Creator by the sins of His rational creatures. All men who are freed from spiritual bondage, all who have ever been sanctified and saved since the fall of mankind, whether they lived before Christ's coming or after, owe their deliverance to Christ's merits. In His Humanity, therefore, He is not only the Teacher of the way to freedom and the Model in the use and attainment of freedom, but the Liberator who actually frees us. He championed the cause of spiritual freedom by His life and death, so that "delivered from the hand of our enemies, we should serve Him without fear."[120]

In a third way our spiritual liberation is Christian, since it is brought to us by Christ Himself through the instrumental causality of His Humanity in begetting and expanding the life of grace in our souls. Not in the past alone but in the present

wealth, which they served without reference to the higher end of man, making it an end in itself." Pius XII, *Christmas Message,* 1943.

[119] *Summa Theol.,* III, q. 48, a. 2; q. 49, a. 1; a. 2.

[120] Luke 2: 74.

too the liberating of the minds and hearts of men from error and sin is the labor of the human Christ, for He Himself actually applies His merits to souls whenever grace is given or increased. He carries on that work of emancipation especially through His Sacraments, but also without the instrumentality of these seven most important means of grace.

In these three ways the Son of God causes and perfects in men the divine sonship by adoption which bestows on us, "according to the measure of Christ's bestowal," [121] a share in "the freedom of the glory of the sons of God." [122] Everything that contributes to the fulness of Christian freedom issues to us from Christ, through His Humanity from His Divinity.

It would be a serious error to regard Christ's liberation of mankind as *exclusively* spiritual, because it is *chiefly* spiritual. Christ's influence and His dominion over men extends to temporal as well as to eternal affairs; His authority in civil affairs, unexercised in His lifetime on earth as it is today, is none the less real.[123] A recognition of His dominion over the exterior and secular life of men, public as well as private, is essential to man's temporal welfare and true liberty in society. "When once men recognize, both in private and in public life, that Christ is King, society will at last receive the great blessing of real liberty, well-ordered discipline, peace, and harmony." [124]

[121] Ephesians 4: 7.

[122] Romans 8: 21.

[123] "It would be a grave error . . . to say that Christ has no authority whatever in civil affairs, since by virtue of the absolute empire over all creatures committed to Him by the Father, all things are in His power. Nevertheless, during His life on earth He refrained from the exercise of such authority and although He Himself disdained to possess or to care for earthly goods, He did not, nor does He today, interfere with those who possess them. . . . Thus the empire of our Redeemer embraces all men. . . . Nor is there any difference in this matter between the individual and the family or the state; for all men, whether collectively or individually, are under the dominion of Christ. In Him is the salvation of the individual, in Him is the salvation of society. . . ." Pius XI, *Quas Primas.*

[124] *Ibid.*

3. *The Catholic Church*

Through time and space Christ continues His work of spiritual liberation for the human race through the supernatural society He founded for that purpose, the Catholic Church. In the Church's custody are the deposit of truth through which Christ frees the human mind from the deficiencies and limitations of a purely human wisdom, and the channels of divine grace through which Christ releases men from spiritual slavery and restores to the sons of Adam their lost inheritance as the sons of God. From Christ the Church has divine authority to speak, and divine power to act, in His name, in order to communicate His truth and channel His grace into the minds and hearts of men.

Christ has made His Church the true emancipator of the whole world and the Mother of human liberty by giving her the means to free men from error and sin.

> In the Catholic Church Christianity is incarnate. . . . She is the continuation of the mission of the Saviour, the daughter and heiress of His Redemption. She has preached the Gospel, and has defended it at the price of her blood. . . . She makes no terms with error, but remains faithful to the commands which she has received to carry the doctrine of Jesus Christ to the uttermost limits of the world and to the end of time and to protect it in its inviolable integrity. Legitimate dispenser of the teachings of the Gospel, she does not reveal herself only as the consoler and redeemer of souls, but she is still more the internal source of justice and charity, and the propagator as well as the guardian of true liberty. . . . The liberty which she gives in no wise conflicts with the rights of truth, because those rights are superior to the demands of liberty. Nor does she infringe upon the rights of justice, because those rights are superior to the claims of mere numbers or power. Nor does she assail the rights of God because they are superior to the rights of humanity.[125]

Traditionally, Christian teaching is so concerned with the freedom which grace and charity bring to the soul that to the

[125] Leo XIII, Apostolic Letter of March 19, 1902.

superficial observer the Church might seem to have been callously indifferent to bondage of the human body. St. Paul, for example, is clearly much more interested in seeing slaves made citizens of heaven and freedmen in Christ's Kingdom than in furthering their civil emancipation; in fact, he advises Christian slaves to pay little attention to the matter. "Wast thou a slave when called? Let it not trouble thee. But if thou canst become free, make use of it rather." [126] St. Thomas understands this as advice to use the human slavery in which the convert was born as a means to humility of heart, rather than to seek release from it. "We should be solicitous only regarding what pertains to salvation," says St. Thomas in explaining St. Paul's attitude, "therefore slavery and freedom should be for us an indifferent matter." [127]

Yet it would certainly be unjust to accuse Christianity of enmity to political and civil freedom on the basis of such advice. St. Paul does not advise those who are free to seek slavery. His advice to them is the same as that to convert slaves: "Brethren, in the state in which he was when called, let every man remain with God." [128] The doctrine of Christ does not favor slavery in civil society. But the civil liberty which is most in conformity with the dignity of the Christian soul must always be a by-product rather than the chief and immediate interest of Christian teaching. The Church, like her Master, knows what is in man and realizes that social freedom cannot always be quickly obtained; that the sudden change through grace from spiritual bondage cannot be matched in temporal affairs.

Moreover, civil freedom granted to men unprepared for such a blessing is calculated to do more harm than good to all concerned, to the newly freed themselves as well as to the freemen to whose status they have been elevated. That is why the early Church prudently

[126] I Cor. 7: 21. [127] *In I Cor.*, c. 7, lect. 4. [128] I Cor. 7: 24.

deprecated any precipitate action in securing the manumission and liberation of the slaves, because that would have entailed tumults and wrought injury, as well to the slaves themselves as to the commonwealth, but with singular wisdom she has seen that the minds of the slaves should be instructed through her discipline in the Christian faith, and with baptism should acquire habits suitable to the Christian life.[129]

In actual instances where imprudent haste has liberated slaves not conditioned by education and training in social virtues for the responsibilities of civil and political freedom, the result has been disastrous.[130] A fit preparation for citizenship is not the work of a day or a decade; for large numbers of men it may well be the work of centuries.

Because of the supreme importance of her work of spiritual liberation, the Church has never ceased throughout her history to claim for herself the widest freedom of action to deliver men from error and sin; she has never hesitated in any age to defy restrictions by which tyranny would check her influence upon the souls of men. And in defending the freedom that is hers by divine right the Church has become the truest champion of every other just liberty. " The struggles which, coerced by the abuse of power, she has had to sustain in defence of the liberty given her by God, were at the same time struggles for man's

[129] Leo XIII, *In Plurimis.*

[130] Note these words of a Pastoral Letter of the American Hierarchy, Oct. 21, 1866: " We must all feel, beloved Brethren, that in some manner a new and most extensive field of charity and devotedness has been opened to us, by the emancipation of the immense slave population of the South. We could have wished that in accordance with the action of the Catholic Church in past ages, in regard to the serfs of Europe, a more gradual system of emancipation could have been adopted, so that they might have been in some measure prepared to make a better use of their freedom, than they are likely to do now. Still, the evils which must necessarily attend the sudden liberation of so large a multitude, with their peculiar dispositions and habits, only make the appeal to our Christian charity and zeal, presented by their forlorn condition, the more forcible and imperative." P. Guilday, *The National Pastorals of the American Hierarchy (1792-1919)*, (Washington, 1923), pp. 220-221. Th foreboding of the American Bishops after the Civil War was more than justified by later events, up to and including our own day.

true liberty." [131] Her independence of the State has always been, and must continue to be, the greatest safeguard society can have against exaggerated claims of secular authority over the lives of men. And the surest sign of latent or full-grown despotism is distrust and enmity of governments for the Church's independence. If civil powers disregard divine rights in this sphere, they are not likely to respect them in others.

If the Church had nothing more than her doctrine to offer as a contribution to the cause of true freedom, mankind would be indebted to her beyond all power of repayment. We have only to recall here her dogmatic defense of the freedom of the human will against every conceivable type of attack, theological, philosophical, or scientific; of the true freedom of the human conscience; of the rights and dignity of the individual and of the family against the encroachments of civil power.

But the Church has far more than her teaching to give mankind in the service of liberty.[132] In her hands are the divine treasures of grace which expel sin and beget virtues, virtues

[131] Pius XII, *Christmas Message*, 1944. The Holy Father said, in an address to the College of Cardinals, June 1, 1946: ". . . Liberty . . . to reach out to what is true and good, liberty such as will be in harmony with the well-being of every people in particular and of the whole great family of peoples—such liberty the Church has ever proclaimed, guarded, and defended. Over sixty years ago Our great predecessor, Leo XIII, called on the evidence of history to show the Church's incessant solicitude to protect the peoples against the despotism of princes careless of the common good, to defend municipalities and families against unjust interference on the part of the state and to uphold the dignity of the human person and the rights of every Christian (*Immortale Dei*). Have not these assertions received a new and convincing confirmation in the past few decades?"

[132] ". . . How and by what means can the Church and the Catholic religion make greater and better contributions to real well-being, whether of the individual, the family or society [than by Christian teachings]? The Church and religion do, in fact, something more and something better for they offer to provide every one of good will with the means which make it possible to derive from those teachings and principles the whole of that practical good whereof they contain the secrets and the generative power. They offer divine grace and instruments and vehicles of grace, prayer, the sacraments, and the Christian life. . . ." Pius XI to Spanish refugees, Sept. 14, 1936.

necessary not only for eternal salvation but for temporal happiness as well. The help of grace alone can supply the strength needed by men to follow the lead of the Church's teaching, and the Church is the Mother of Freedom because through her Sacraments she is a supernatural Mother of grace. The Church is the surest support of temporal as well as eternal freedom when she is

> free from envy and strong in her liberty as the minister of the Gospel truth and grace to the notable welfare of States. For as she has been given by God as a teacher and guide to the human race, she can contribute assistance which is peculiarly adapted to direct even the most radical transformations of time to the common good, to solve the most complicated questions, and to promote uprightness and justice, which are the most solid foundations of the commonwealth.[133]

So notable and manifest are the Church's benefits to men in the temporal order, she could not do more for the human race on this earth if her aims were only earthly.

> The Catholic Church has for her immediate and natural purpose the saving of souls and the securing of our happiness in heaven. Yet in things temporal she is the source of benefits as manifold and great as if the chief end of her existence were to ensure the well-being of our earthly life. And truly, wherever the Church has set her foot, she has straightway changed the face of things, and has pervaded the moral tone of the people with a new civilization, and with virtues before unknown. All nations that have yielded to her sway have become eminent for their culture, their sense of justice, and the glory of their high deeds.[134]

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[133] Leo XIII, *Praeclara Gratulationis Publicae* (June 20, 1894).

[134] *Immortale Dei.* Pope Leo expressed the same thought in the Encyclical Letter *Longinqua Oceani* (Jan. 6, 1895), on the Catholic Church in the United States: ". . . Without morality the State cannot endure. . . . But the best and strongest support of morality is religion. . . . Now what is the Church other than a legitimate society, founded by the will and ordinance of Jesus Christ for the preservation of morality and the defense of religion? For this reason We have repeatedly endeavored, from the summit of the pontifical dignity, to inculcate that the Church, whilst directly and immediately aiming at the salvation of souls and

It is of absolute importance for the world to realize not only that the Church contributes in this way to the external liberty and prosperity of mankind, but also that the Church *alone* can do this. No human agency can take her place. There are no other means in God's ordinary Providence in regard to mankind for reaching into men's souls and emancipating their minds and hearts but the means created in the Catholic Church. And it is not only the Church's principles but history itself that bears witness to mankind's need of the Church even for the temporal order. Pius XII has stressed this point. The Church's aid, he says in *Summi Pontificatus*, " is shown to be indispensable as never before, now that sad experience teaches that external means and human provisions and political expedients of themselves bring no efficacious healing to the ills which affect mankind." [135]

Only where the Church's influence has been felt, have external liberties flourished. That is a historical certainty the enemies of the Church will never be able to explain away. Where Christianity flourishes, freedom flowers also in the social order; where Christianity decays, freedom dies also.[136]

the beatitude which is to be attained in heaven, is yet, even in the order of temporal things, the fountain of blessings so numerous and great that they could not have been greater or more numerous had the original purpose of her institution been the pursuit of happiness during the life which is spent on earth."

[135] " No defense of Christianity could be more effective than the present straits. From the immense vortex of error and anti-Christian movements there has come a crop of such poignant disasters as to constitute a condemnation surpassing in its conclusiveness any merely theoretical refutation." *Ibid.*

[136] " The Christian society is not merely a free society, it is the *only* free society which has ever endured. It is not a coincidence but a consequence that, wherever the basic Christian institutions have been destroyed, so the powers and responsibilities of governments, even in Christian countries, have had to be increased until today the tasks of government, and the funds required to discharge them, are alike so great as to tax to their utmost limits the resources of the richest peoples in the world. The end of this process is seen in the final necessity imposed upon governments which have destroyed all the institutions of a free society, to appropriate all the resources of their country to maintain their organization, and to destroy

It is admitted by all who have studied history impartially that the greatest blow dealt to the institution of slavery was struck by the Christian Church. Writing of slavery and serfdom, Sorokin has said:

> Christianity did not create these forms; neither did it aggravate them; if anything, after its inception it tended to mitigate and eliminate them. In the early Christian Church the slave members were not slaves at all; they were considered equal to the free members; even more, many of the early Christian leaders (preachers, priests, bishops) had been slaves. When the Church was legalized, the very entrance of a slave into the Christian Church often made him free. Subsequently, if the Christian Church did not eliminate serfdom entirely, it mitigated it and was the earliest and the main agent which fought for the freedom of the slaves and their humane treatment.[137]

Freedom grows where the faith develops;[138] it dies where the Church is denied the exercise of her influence. Where the Church has not penetrated, there is no real external liberty for the generality of men. In pagan countries even today slavery is a recognized social institution, and civil freedom for all is hardly even an ideal.[139] In the face of such lucid evidence it is

all the rights of personality in order to maintain their authority" Douglas Jerrold, *The Future of Freedom* (New York, 1938), p. 10.

[137] Sorokin, *op. cit.*, III, 134-135.

[138] The history of the Church's part in widening civil freedom in Christian times has been masterfully summarized by Pope Leo XIII in an Encyclical which deserves far more recognition than it has been given. It is the letter *In Plurimis* to the Bishops of Brazil, written May 5, 1888, just a few weeks before the well-known *Libertas Praestantissimum*. The occasion for the document was the liberation of Brazilian slaves by the government. *In Plurimis* deals with the doctrine of the Church concerning human slavery and with the Church's efforts in past and present to alleviate the condition of slaves and to free them. It is a thorough condemnation of the system and a complete justification of the Church's attitude towards slavery.

[139] "A civilization in opposition to the holy doctrines and laws of the Church is a civilization in appearance only, a mere name without the substance. A remarkable proof of this is supplied us by the populations on whom the light of the Gospel has not shone. In their life a species of exterior culture may be perceived, but the real and solid advantages of civilization are not found. We cannot look on an

difficult to understand how Christianity could ever be charged with hostility to freedom. Whenever the Church is so accused, the concept of liberty held by the accusers will merit re-examining.[140]

4. *Faith*

"Jesus therefore said to the Jews who had come to believe in Him, 'If you abide in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"[141] From these words of Christ it is clear that the truth which emancipates is the Gospel, the supernatural truth of His word which in its essentials is beyond the reach of human reason and is accepted on faith by those who come to believe in His authority as a divine Teacher. The relative liberation of man's mind by truth naturally knowable is insufficient for human needs. Though Christ's words are sometimes quoted as if He meant only the truth of philosophy, of the natural sciences, or even the factual truth of history, He was not speaking of these truths. Christ was emphatic on the need of the mind for an acceptance of the mysteries of faith

audacious disdain of all legitimate power as a perfection of civil life. Neither can we salute by the name of liberty the pursuit of a disgraceful and unhappy course that leads to the unchecked propagation of errors, the unhindered satisfaction of the worst passions, the impunity with which crimes can be committed, and the oppression of honest citizens of every class. These are false, erroneous, and perverse principles." Leo XIII, *Inscrutabili* (April 21, 1878).

[140] "*The Church the enemy of liberty*! Ah, how they travesty the idea of liberty. . . . Do they mean by liberty the rational faculty to do good, magnanimously, without check or hindrance and according to the rules which eternal justice has established? That liberty, which is the only liberty worthy of man, none favors or encourages or protects more than the Church. In every age she has defended the feeble and the oppressed against the arrogant domination of the strong. She has demanded liberty of Christian conscience while pouring out in torrents the blood of her martyrs; she has restored to the child and to the woman the dignity and the noble prerogatives of their nature in making them share, by virtue of the same right, that reverence and justice which is their due; and she has largely contributed both to introduce and maintain civil and political liberty in the heart of the nations." Leo XIII, Apostolic Letter of March 19, 1902.

[141] John 8: 31-32.

if it is to attain full liberty from error. Anything less, no matter how good and desirable in itself, leaves the mind in spiritual bondage, and the heart as well.[142]

What Christ said, equivalently, was, "Faith shall make you free," for it is only by an unconditional assent to His words that His liberating doctrine becomes truly ours. That liberation is itself essentially an interior, spiritual release from error and darkness which would hold the mind, and consequently the will, back from God, the goal of all human liberty. Freedom without faith is liberty in error, and the spiritual death of the mind.[143]

It is not only individual spiritual freedom which rests on this supernatural wisdom, but the natural freedom of society as well. Leo XIII pointed out the necessity of supernatural guidance for society:

> . . . Nowadays . . . states not only refuse to conform to the rules of Christian wisdom, but seem even anxious to recede from them further on each successive day. . . . We repudiate not the assured and useful improvements of our age, but devoutly wish affairs of State to take a safer course than they are now taking, and to rest on a more firm foundation without injury to the true freedom of the people; for the best parent and guardian of liberty among men is truth. *The truth shall make you free* (John 8: 32).[144]

When Christ, in the same Gospel that proclaims the deliverance of the human soul by faith in His truth, speaks of His own Person as "the Truth,"[145] He implies that it is He personally

[142] "Our Redeemer said of Himself, 'For this was I born and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth' (John 18: 37). Likewise 'I came to send fire upon the earth and what will I but that it be kindled' (Luke 12: 49). In the knowledge of this truth, which is the highest perfection of the mind; and in divine charity, which in like manner perfects the will, consist the whole life and liberty of Christians." Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Christianae* (Jan. 10, 1890).

[143] "But what is a worse death of the soul than freedom of error." St. Augustine, Ep. 166 (alias 105; 10) (*ML* 33, 400).

[144] *Immortale Dei.*

[145] John 14: 6.

Who sets us free, and not just an abstract doctrine or set of moral principles. This He does by His own personal action on souls, as we have seen above. From Him, through His gift of faith perfecting our minds, we receive a share in His own infinite self-knowledge; our intellects are placed in contact with the First Truth, which is Divinity Itself. We are freed from the limitations imposed on our minds by their native incapacity for the attainment of supernatural truth, and elevated to a freedom which is, even on earth, a beginning of the liberty of perfect beatitude in the eternal vision of the Trinity.[146]

The perfecting of the intelligence by faith in Christ not only looses the mind from the chains of error,[147] but delivers the whole man from the bonds of rational nature. Faith widens the horizons of the mind because it is like

an explosion which has broken down the walls of the world, or a storming of nature by the hosts of heaven that man might be released from the limitations of his humanity. It grants to man the freedom by which he can surpass not only the limits of the present,

[146] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 4, a. 1. Cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Christian Perfection and Contemplation* (St. Louis, 1937), pp. 114-129.

[147] Leo XIII, in the Encyclical *Tametsi Futura Prospicientibus* (Nov. 1, 1900), developing the doctrine that "Christ is alone the way, the truth, and the life (John 14: 6)," says concerning Christ as the Truth:

"If there are many things in nature itself which are mysterious and obscure, and which no human intelligence can explain . . . it will be a perverse freedom of thought not to allow for things existing outside the domain of nature altogether, which are above nature, and beyond our minds to fathom. To refuse to accept dogmas evidently means to do away with the whole Christian religion. The mind must be subjected, humbly and submissively, *to the obedience of Christ* (II Cor. 10: 5), so as to be held, as it were, captive to His will and sovereignty. . . . There is nothing servile in serving Christ our Lord with the understanding, but it is especially consonant to reason and to our personal dignity. For a man . . . attains at once the natural good of the mind and mental freedom. For truth, as proceeding from the authoritative teaching of Christ, sets in a clear light the intrinsic character and relative importance of things, whatever they may be, and thus instructed and obedient to the truth which he sees, he will not subject himself to creatures, but creatures to himself; he will not let passion rule reason, but will make reason rule passion; casting off the pernicious slavery of sin and error, he will be made free with the best kind of freedom."

of the past, of space, of material things, but even the limits of all nature. By it his mind walks into the limitlessness of God.[148]

As a created share in God's own view of the universe, the gift of faith places its possessor on a superhuman vantage point to understand many things, which, from the purely natural viewpoint, are almost totally unintelligible, as for example, the mysteries of suffering and sin.[149]

It is a clear consequence from this teaching that whatever hinders the spread of Christian truth is an invasion of an essential human freedom, the freedom of the mind. No other body of doctrine can bring the mind which thirsts for the First Truth, anything more than an incomplete intellectual liberty. Yet even the truth of Christianity must fail to free if it is incompletely presented or carelessly credited by a more or less emotional and unthinking acceptance of Christ. It is a conscious assent to the whole teaching of Christ the mind of

[148] W. Farrell, O. P., *A Companion to the Summa*, III (New York, 1940), p. 5.

[149] Christ's teaching on the liberating power of faith finds a special concrete confirmation in the testimony of converts, who often confess, after entering the Church, that they have found a liberty as unexpected as it was unexperienced. "I have never been able to analyze the curious feeling of freedom which usually comes to the convert, when the exact opposite might have been expected according to any human calculation," wrote Msgr. Ronald Knox. H. Belloc and others, *Why I Am a Catholic* (New York, 1932), p. 75.

"I was told that if I should become a Catholic my mind would be fettered, my reason stifled. . . . I have found on the contrary that the Catholic Church placed me on a platform of truth from which even a poor mind like mine can rise to fathomless heights. I have found the truth that sets men free." O. F. Dudley, in *Through Hundred Gates*, Severin and Stephen Lamping, O. F. M., ed. (Milwaukee, 1939), p. 65.

"The very idea of submitting to authority had seemed to me like going into slavery. But I did not then know, as I do now, that to become a Catholic is . . . to find true freedom. . . . To discover truth, to know it is the truth, and to embrace it—what greater or higher freedom can one have than that." J. Moody, *The Long Road Home* (New York, 1935), p. 225.

"My first sensation . . . was one of freedom. . . . Here was liberty to believe and accept and love with all one's heart without any misgiving or restraint." A. Dulles, *A Testimonial to Grace* (New York, 1946), p. 116.

man needs for freedom, not a credulity which swallows crumbs of His doctrine and thinks itself filled.

Christian traditions deeply imbedded in the Western mind and heart have been up to now the chief defense of Christian civilization against widely accepted errors.[150] But no freedom, either of mind or of body, will be secured by such a substitute for conscious belief in the whole Christian creed; opinion cannot purge the mind of error like the certitude of faith, especially since wavering assent to Christian principles is based more on human than on divine authority.

Fortunately, false principles do not always exercise their full influence, especially when age-old Christian traditions, on which the peoples have been nurtured, remain still deeply, even if unconsciously rooted in their hearts. Nonetheless, one must not forget the essential insufficiency and weakness of every principle of social life which rests upon a purely human foundation, is inspired by merely earthly motives and relies for its force on the sanction of a purely external authority.[151]

Slavery of the mind is far more degrading and a far more serious injury to human dignity than slavery of the body, for nobler powers are fettered by errors than by chains. Whatever semblance of intellectual liberty men gain as they uncover the humanly knowable with the searchlights of science and

[150] "The last centuries have seen on the one side Christian civilization being systematically menaced in its very foundations, and on the other the heritage of that civilization being ever more diffused among the peoples. Europe and the other continents are still living, in varying degrees, by the vital forces and principles which the heritage of the Christian faith has infused into them by a kind of spiritual blood-transfusion. Some people come to forget this precious heritage, to neglect it, even to repudiate it. But the fact of that hereditary succession remains. . . . Those sons who have gone far away and become estranged from their Father's House hear always . . . the echo of that Christian heritage which often preserves them, in their decisions and conduct, from being entirely guided by the false ideas to which consciously or in fact they adhere." Pius XII, in a broadcast over the Vatican radio, Sept. 1, 1944.

[151] Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus,* Oct. 20, 1939.

philosophy is inadequate to clear the mind's primeval darkness; only supernatural faith can restore its vision.[152]

The doctrine of Christ can free the individual and society not only from speculative error concerning God, mankind, and their mutual relations but also from practical error regarding principles of conduct in public and private life. Christ's teaching contains a code as well as a creed, and a knowledge of that code is essential to spiritual liberty. Thus Christ liberates the intellect in both its functions, the truth of His creed delivering the speculative intellect, the truth of His law freeing the practical intellect in its guidance of the will. It is logical, then, to turn here from a consideration of the Christian creed to the Christian commandments, the New Law of Christ.

5. *The New Law*

A. Law in general

The law of Christ is termed by St. James "the perfect law of liberty." [153] To many a modern mind the phrase might seem a blending of contradictories, for the idea that law and human liberty are necessarily antagonistic and irreconcilable is widespread in our day. The evil root of this opinion lies in the error of conceiving law to be primarily a product of the will, rather

[152] "When Jesus was crucified 'there was darkness over the whole earth' (Matt. 27: 45); a terrifying symbol of what happened and what still happens spiritually wherever incredulity, blind and proud of itself, has succeeded in excluding Christ from modern life, especially from public life, and has undermined faith in God as well as faith in Christ. . . .

"Many perhaps, while abandoning the teaching of Christ, were not fully conscious of being led astray by a mirage of glittering phrases, which proclaimed such estrangement as an escape from the slavery in which they were before held; nor did they then foresee the bitter consequences of bartering the truth that sets free, for error which enslaves. They did not realize that, in renouncing that infinitely wise and paternal law of God, and the unifying and elevating doctrine of Christ's love, they were resigning themselves to the whim of a poor, fickle human wisdom; they spoke of progress, when they were going back; of being raised, when they grovelled; of arriving at man's estate, when they stooped to servility." *Ibid.*

[153] James 1: 25.

than of the mind, of the legislator; a wish or a whim, rather than a judgment. Every abuse of authority lends color to the error. The logical outcome is the mistaken notion of law as the imposition of the will of the superior on an inferior.

The Thomistic concept of law as a direction to a good by the reason of the superior is the only theory of law which can be reconciled with true freedom. If law is primarily a product of reason, it is guidance for the right use of liberty, not a hindrance to freedom. The essential note of law is rationality, not wilfulness; law is for man intellectual direction to the achievement of moral good.

The classic definition of law was given by St. Thomas: "an ordinance of reason for the common good, promulgated by him who has the care of the community." [154] The highest law of all is the eternal law of God existing from eternity in the divine mind, according to which God governs His universe. It is identical with God Himself as the Supreme Legislator Whose eternal decrees are to be carried out in time by His creatures, freely by creatures endowed with liberty of choice, necessarily by the rest of creation. In rational creatures there is a reflection of those eternal decrees as they concern human nature, an echo of the eternal law which is called natural law.[155] Instilled in man and essential to his nature, this law is a transcription of God's voice as recorded in human reason, commanding us to do good and forbidding evil actions. In the natural law are the broad general principles of human conduct, precepts and prohibitions to be observed in the effort to attain God as the last end of human life. In positive law human legislators, whose authority is a participation in God's legislative power, determine, according to the changing circumstances of time and place, specific means whereby the general precepts of the natural law will be more readily observed in society. Positive law derives its binding power from the natural law.[156]

[154] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 90, a. 4. [155] *Ibid.*, q. 91, a. 2. [156] *Ibid.*, a. 3.

Without revelation the existence and obligation of these three types of law, eternal, natural, and positive, can be arrived at with certainty by human reason. Revelation adds to our knowledge of law by making known the existence of positive law which comes to us from God Himself, i. e., the revealed law of the Old and the New Dispensations; and also the so-called law of the *fomes* of sin.[157] The revealed law of the New Testament is " the law of liberty " given us by Christ, the Gospel law which is here our chief concern.

B. Law and Liberty

All law is a true cause of real liberty. Law, if it be just, and liberty, if it be true, can never be at odds. The two are not opposed, but inter-related, because law implies liberty, and liberty needs law. Law implies liberty of choice by which law is fulfilled, law acting as the guide and the guard of freedom, directing it toward good, and protecting it from evil choices. Ultimately both law and liberty are traceable to God as their source; proximately, both are rooted in reason. There can be no conflict between them when both are properly understood; they are complementary, not antithetical. For the essence of liberty is obedience to law, and the essence of law is the guidance of liberty.[158]

Wherever law and human liberty clash, there must be something vicious in one or other, or even in both of them. True liberty can never be in harmony with a corruption of law, as, for example, laws enacted to suppress the Christian faith, or in fundamental discord with the natural moral law. An antagonism of this sort, in fact, only serves to manifest in the most striking fashion the correlation between liberty and law, since rebellion would be liberty's accord with a higher law which demands that we obey God rather than men if men oppose His will.[159]

[157] *Ibid.*, a. 4; a. 5; a. 6.
[158] Cf. *Libertas.*
[159] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 95, a. 2. Cf. also *ibid.*, q. 96, a. 4.

On the other hand, just law will not crush true liberty, but only corruptions of liberty. License, impelling the individual will to vice, is of its very nature at war with law, directing the will to virtue. An embezzler's liberty contradicts both divine and human law, but the conflict makes no case for an essential discord between freedom and authority.

If, as may also happen, both law and liberty turn aside to evil rather than good, there may be an apparent harmony between them, temporarily at least. A decadent people may find no threat to their personal or societal liberty in legislation against the Church. Yet even in such a case as this reason will eventually reassert its rights either in law or in the exercise of true freedom, and the elemental conflict will emerge.

Between a well-regulated will and law there is no disagreement; law then exercises a directive function in the use of freedom. Between an evil will and law there is a conflict, which must be resolved in favor of law by its coercive power.[160] Yet law is always to be regarded as primarily directive, rather than coercive. The restrictive aspect is secondary.[161] Coercion itself is motivated by the purpose of educating perverse wills in the right use of liberty. For the just, however, the disciplinary and coercive power of the law need not be exercised. "Every law is imposed on two kinds of men. For it is imposed on some who are hard-hearted and proud, whom the law restrains and tames; and it is imposed on good men, who, through being instructed by law, are helped to fulfill what they desire to do." [162]

The function of law as the helpful director of freedom for the virtuous man would have been exercised even in the social life of integral nature, if the race had not fallen in Adam.[163] The coactive aspect of law would have been missing, but the essence

[160] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 95, a. 1, ad 1.

[161] *Ibid.*, q. 96, a. 5, corp.: "The notion of law contains two things: first, that it is a rule of human acts; secondly, that it has coercive power."

[162] *Ibid.*, q. 98, a. 6, corp.

[163] *Ibid.*, I, q. 96, a. 4.

of law would have remained intact. This would have been true not only of the eternal law and of natural law, but of human law also.

For mankind as restored to supernatural life by the grace of the new Adam, law still has the same function as far as the just are concerned, since "law does not coerce them in the way that it does the wicked."[164] In this respect the just are like the ruler, who is not subject to his own law as coactive but rather as directive.[165]

For the just, then, law is an educator in the right use of free will, pointing ahead and leading the way to the fulness of liberty. The virtuous see the index finger of law and do not feel its grip, as others do whose lack of virtue gives them a sharper sense of the law's strength than its wisdom. The law must drive men when it cannot lead, and thus hinder evil-doers from misusing liberty to their own destruction, and from molesting others.[166]

The reconciliation, if it may be so termed, between true liberty and the demands of law is through the mediation of virtue, i.e., fixed dispositions of character from which will flow voluntariness in the fulfillment of law. Virtue alone can lead men to love the good for its own sake and obey law freely rather than through coercion and fear of punishment. Virtue alone can so dispose a man toward law that he is inclined towards justice even without the law.[167]

The real problem, therefore, is not so much the theoretical harmonization of law with liberty, but the more practical

[164] *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 96 a. 5, ad 1. Cajetan comments on this statement that it is to be understood in the sense "that the just man for his part is not subject to the law as one who is forced . . . because the just man is subject to the law voluntarily." It does not mean that the law has no coercive power over the just, even though that force of the law is not exercised. The law has the power of coercion over all subject to it.

[165] *Ibid.*, ad 3.

[166] *Ibid.*, q. 95, a. 1, corp.

[167] III *Cont. Gent.*, c. 28.

difficulty of developing virtues that incline men to walk voluntarily along the road of law. And revelation alone gives the full solution to that problem. The New Law of Christ is the only source of full liberty for mankind. The sole true, permanent, and effective adjustment of the claims of law and of liberty comes from a supernatural source: the grace of the virtues and the gifts, which is the essence of Christ's Law. This is the law of liberty whereby God begets in man an interiorization of law capable of effecting spontaneous compliance with law, without the slightest prejudice to freedom.[168]

Law is necessary for the direction of freedom of choice towards good and away from evil. The New Law of Christ gives perfect direction. Without the law of Christ as perfect guidance in the exercise of freedom all the guidance for liberty in lesser laws is insufficient. The New Law alone can make the human will *willing*, in the fullest sense, in the pursuit of true good.

[168] For St. Thomas's treatment of the revealed law of the Old and New Testaments, see *Summa Theol.*, I-II, qq. 98-108. The whole tract on law includes qq. 90-108, the last eleven questions dealing with divine law. In other words, the major portion of St. Thomas's discussion of law deals with divine positive law. Quantitatively, there are two to three times as many pages on revealed law as there are on eternal, natural, and human law, several of the articles on the Old Law being among the lengthiest in the *Summa*. Yet Thomistic teaching on law is often presented with hardly more than a passing reference to divine law, to which St. Thomas himself attached so much importance. To omit or even to minimize the place of the Old and the New Laws in the Thomistic synthesis will not do justice to St. Thomas's mind; what is more important, it will fail to give an accurate account of the *de facto* situation of mankind, which is exactly what St. Thomas was trying to give. In this respect, the doctrine of St. Thomas falls victim to Naturalism. Granted the necessity of differentiating philosophical from theological problems, the conclusions of human reason from revealed certitudes, there is still no justification for presenting half of St. Thomas's analysis of law as the whole. St. Thomas treated law as a theologian; extracting the philosophical elements from his tract is legitimate only when these are not exposed as his complete teaching. It is St. Thomas's analysis of the New Law which suffers most from this neglect of the latter portion of the tract.

C. The Old Law

The positive divine legislation is revealed to mankind in the Old Law of Moses and the New Law of Christ.[169] It is the teaching of the Scriptures and the Church that these two laws, both promulgated for men by God Himself, are not specifically different, but are rather related to each other as imperfect and perfect in the same species, standing in the same relationship as seed to tree or boy to man.[170] The New Law is the perfecting by Christ, the God-Man, of the Law given the Jewish people for their moral, religious, and political guidance. The Old Law through the Jewish race; Christ Himself provides its fulfillment was the divine preparation for the advent of the Saviour in the New.[171]

Binding on the Chosen People alone, except for those moral commands it contained, in the Decalogue, which were already obligatory for all men as included in the natural law, the Mosaic Law embraced three distinct types of precepts: moral, ceremonial, and judicial.[172] The Ten Commandents are the moral precepts, which bind man to worship God and to be just to his neighbor. In the ceremonial precepts are detailed instructions as to how the Jewish race was to fulfill that general command to worship God; in the judicial precepts, as to how justice might be done to men.

In every respect, when compared to the New Law, the Law of Moses bears the mark of imperfection. St. Thomas has summed up the various differences under three main heads: (1) the Old Law promised to those who observed it sensible, earthly, temporal goods; the New promises intelligible, heavenly, eternal goods; (2) the Old Law aimed chiefly at ordering man's exterior life; the New, his interior activity; (3) the Old Law induced men to virtue through fear; the New, by love, which, adds St. Thomas, " is poured into our hearts by the

[169] *Ibid.*, q. 91, a. 4; a. 5.
[170] *Ibid.*, a. 5; q. 107, a. 1.
[171] *Ibid.*, q. 107, a. 2.
[172] *Ibid.*, q. 99.

grace of Christ, bestowed in the New Law, but foreshadowed in the Old." [173]

In this last difference, the difference between fear and love, there is an implication of the chief deficiency in the Old Law. For the Old Law pointed the way to salvation, but gave of itself no help to follow the way; the New Law, on the other hand, can do both. The Old Law did not give the grace needed to fulfill the divine command; it could not justify those who lived under it and thus was incapable of accomplishing its purpose, the salvation of men. It was good, but imperfect in that it could not go far enough in accomplishing what only the New Law, and no other, can do: it could not give the grace of Christ and the Holy Spirit which man must have to obey the Law of God and attain salvation.[174] " The yoke of the Law could not be borne without the help of grace, which the Law did not confer." [175] The Old Law brought knowledge of sin and fear of its consequences; the New instructs, but also infuses a love of God and of virtue which always accompanies the grace of Christ. St. Paul wrote of the Law that it " brought nothing to perfection." [176] Its failure to help those under it made it a burden which St. Peter called " a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear." [177] Though divine in its origin, the Mosaic Law was, in itself and apart from the grace available through faith in the Redeemer to come,[178] an impediment to salvation and an occasion of sin, for it prescribed what is good without furnishing the aid of grace for its fulfillment.[179]

There are still other differences between the Old and the New Laws which accentuate the imperfection of the one and the perfection of the other. Both came from God, but the Old

[173] *Ibid.*, q. 91, a. 5, corp.
[174] *Ibid.*, q. 98, a. 1.
[175] *Ibid.*, ad 3.
[176] Hebrews 7: 19.
[177] Acts 15: 10.
[178] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 98, a. 2, ad 4.
[179] *Ibid.*, q. 99, a. 2, ad 3; q. 98, a. 1, ad 2. Cf. Gonet, *Clypeus Theologiae Thomisticae* (Paris, 1876), IV, 560.

Law came through Moses, the New, through Christ.[180] The Old Law was directed to one people; the New, to the whole world. The Old Law was meant to last only till the coming of the Redeemer; the New, till the end of time. The Old Law gave an obscure knowledge of the mysteries of faith and demanded observance of many difficult precepts besides the moral law; the New Law gives clearer knowledge of mysteries, and has few observances comparable to Jewish law. The Old Law was hard to observe, though by no means impossible;[181] the New Law has its own special difficulties, inasmuch as it aims at a higher morality, but these are rendered easy to men by the abundance of grace that is poured out on Christ's followers. Therein lies the reason why Christ asserted that His yoke is sweet and His burden light. The Old Law, finally, was promulgated on tables of stone, by the ministry of angels; the New Law is written "on the fleshly tables of the heart"[182] by the grace of the Holy Spirit. And this last difference returns us to the main difference: the New Law helps towards the attainment of its purpose, that is, virtue and salvation; the Old Law did not, because it could not. And the New Law does so because "it is in the first place a law that is inscribed on our hearts"; only secondarily is it a written law.[183] The New Law is fundamentally an interior, living law instilled in the mind and the heart with the infusion of grace. As such it is a Law which both instructs and sanctifies.[184] The written Law of Christ as contained in the New Testment, for all its importance and indispensability, is but secondary to the inner law of grace which is the prime element in the true Christian life.

It is true, of course, that many were justified under the Old Law, profiting, through faith, in Christ's work of Redemption. But their justification and salvation was by the grace of the New Law, not by the external fulfillment of the works of the

[180] John 1: 17.
[181] Cf. Gonet, *op. cit.*, IV, 542.
[182] II Cor. 3: 3.
[183] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 106, a. 1.
[184] *Ibid.*, a. 2.

Old. Those who were sanctified and saved belong, as such, to the New Law.[185]

When we speak of the imperfection of the Old Law, however, we should not lose sight of the fact that in itself, as a divine gift for the complete guidance of a whole people, it was far more perfect than any law human wisdom could have formulated. The label " imperfect " should not be misapprehended. It is only by comparison with the New Law that it is imperfect.[186] Compared with any other positive law, it bears no such stamp of inferiority.

Because the Old Law is a law of fear, and the New, a law of love, the difference between them can also be expressed in terms of slavery and freedom. For fear is the characteristic motivation of the slave; love, of the free man.[187]

The spirit of fear and bondage is cast out by the spirit of love and liberty which is the core of the Christian law. In this respect, as in all others, the Old Law was fulfilled and completed by the New.[188] " The end of every law is to make men just and virtuous. . . . Consequently, the end of the Old Law was the justification of men. The Law, however, could not accomplish this. . . . In this respect, the New Law fulfills the Old by justifying men through the power of Christ's Passion."[189]

D. The New Law

The most important truth about the New Law, and the one most easily overlooked, is that it is primarily not a written code embracing precepts and prohibitions like the Old Law or human law; it is a life imbedded in the human soul, mind, and will. " That which is preponderant in the law of the

[185] *Ibid.*, q. 106, a. 1, ad 3; q. 107, a. 1, ad 2.

[186] ". . . imperfect, not positively but negatively and comparatively, that is, less perfect than the New Law." Gonet, *op. cit.*, IV, 544.

[187] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 107, a. 1, ad 2.

[188] *Ibid.*, a. 2.

[189] *Ibid.*

New Testament, and whereon all its efficacy is based, is the grace of the Holy Ghost, which is given to those who believe in Christ." [190] In this interior Law is fulfilled the promise made through the prophet Jeremias: "Behold the days shall come, saith the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Juda. . . . This shall be the covenant that I will make: . . . I will give my law in their bowels, and I will write it in their heart: and I will be their God and they shall be my people." [191] This law is no mere instruction; it is, as St. James expresses it, "the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls." [192]

Though Christ's teachings and precepts are given to mankind in written form in the New Testament, the Law of the Gospel is not primarily in them. For they stand in the same relation to what is principal in the New Law as the Decalogue does to the law of nature. Just as the Ten Commandments given to Moses on the Mount are not in themselves, as codified on two tables of stone, the natural law indelibly inscribed on the human

[190] *Ibid.*, q. 106, a. 1.

[191] Jeremias 31: 31, 33. St. Paul explains this prophecy as referring to the New Law in Hebrews 8: 8, 10.

It is worthy of note here that Pope Pius XII, in a radio message signalizing the end of the war in Europe, cited a similar prophecy in Ezechiel 36 :26-28, the fulfillment of which the Holy Father regards as the *only* way to lasting peace:

"The war has aroused everywhere discord, suspicion, and hatred. If, therefore, the world wished to regain peace, it is necessary that falsehood and rancor should vanish and in their stead that sovereign truth and charity should reign. Above all, however, in our daily prayers, we should beseech God constantly to fulfill His promise made by the mouth of the Prophet Ezechiel: 'And I will give them a new heart, and will put a new spirit in their bowels; and I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh; that they may walk in my commandments, and keep my judgments, and do them; and that they may be my people, and that I may be their God.' *Then and only then* will the reborn world avoid the return to the tremendous scourge of war, and there will reign a true, stable and universal brotherhood and that peace guaranteed by Christ even on earth *to those who are willing to believe and trust in His law of love.*"

The spiritual conditions here laid down for true peace are the conditions required for lasting liberty. (Italics ours.)

[192] James 1: 22.

heart, so too the Gospels are not in themselves the supernatural New Law of Christ. That too is inscribed on human hearts. As an external reminder of natural obligations, the Decalogue is a guide and help to nature; the written Gospel is a like aid and guide to grace. "The Gospel writings," says St. Thomas, "contain only such things as pertain to the grace of the Holy Ghost, either by disposing us thereto, or by directing us to the use thereof." [193] The New Law is fundamentally not a book, but a life. It is an inward renewal of man, for which there is no better analogy in the natural order than in the generation and growth of a new person. On the supernatural level this life operates with the instinctive drive of a nature. It is instilled like a nature,[194] and is developed like a nature, i. e., primarily from within, by the activity of intrinsic principles.

This inward law has a power no external code can possess, even an external code emanating from divine rather than purely human wisdom. The Old Law and the Gospel writings are like human law in that they can only make known what is to be done or to be avoided; but by the inward New Law, "the Holy Spirit dwelling in the soul not only teaches us what should be done by enlightening the intelligence concerning our activity, but also inclines our affection towards righteous action." [195]

Fundamentally, then, the New Law is not "legal" in the ordinary meaning of that term. Compared with other laws, it bears far greater likeness to the natural law than to any other by reason of its inwardness, as the Old Law most closely resembles human law because of its externality. It is a law with power to move men as well as direct them, helping those subject to it to fulfill it. No other law of God or man can do that. Its "motive" power is not coactive only, for all laws have that quality; its specific power is rather "impulsive," in

[193] *Ibid.*, ad 1. [194] *Ibid.*, ad 2. [195] *In Rom.*, c. 8, lect. 1.

as much as it inspires activity in an instinctive rather than an unnatural, violent manner.[196]

The dangers in regarding the New Law as a more advanced version of the Old Law, a refinement of the ancient external code but not otherwise unlike it, are apparent, once we understand the difficulty involved in fulfilling either of them, but especially the New Law. The Mosaic Law with its attention to externals was in this respect, says St. Thomas, "a much heavier burden than the New, since the Old Law by its numerous ceremonies prescribed many more outward acts than the New Law, which, in the teaching of Christ and the apostles, added very few precepts to those of the natural law." The New Law's difficulties lie in the virtuous interior life it prescribes. "In this respect the precepts of the New Law are more burdensome than those of the Old, because the New Law prohibits certain interior movements of the soul, which were not expressly forbidden in the Old Law in all cases. . . . Now this is very difficult to a man without virtue." [197]

If this higher morality is regarded as something entirely imposed and not also instilled, it becomes an even more unbearable burden than the Old Law was for the Jewish people. The written law of Christ is unquestionably more difficult to observe than the commands of other codes. The only reason Christ considered His yoke sweet and His burden light for men was that His grace makes the fulfillment of the Gospel possible. Without the inward law, the outward precepts cannot be kept. And St. Thomas shows no reluctance to admit that "the letter

[196] Note St. Thomas's use of the expression "*ex instinctu gratiae*." "through the promptings of grace," (I-II, q. 108, a. 1, ad 2). In the same place he points out that "man does of his own accord that which he does from a habit that is suitable to his nature, since a habit inclines after the manner of a nature. . . . Since, then, the grace of the Holy Ghost is like an interior habit bestowed on us and inclining us to act rightly, it makes us do freely those things that are becoming to grace, and shun what is opposed to it."

[197] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 107, a. 4.

even of the Gospel would kill, unless there were the inward presence of the healing grace of faith." [198]

As a participation of the divine nature, the grace of the New Law elevates and perfects the natural life of man. A supernature imbedded in the spiritual essence of the human soul, it does not and cannot violate the nature it thus exalts, for it acts in such a way as to leave intact the soul's natural freedom, as well as its other inborn endowments. Without the life of grace, however, the natural freedom of man tends too readily to choose evil rather than good, in spite of reason's innate urge to virtue. Only with grace can this inclination to evil be overcome.[199] The habitual proneness of fallen nature to evil is rectified by the infused life of grace, which sets up the contrary inclination to virtue. As an habitual disposition toward what is good, the grace of the New Law is a second " nature " on the supernatural plane, giving man in the pursuit of goodness something of the instinctive spontaneity which is associated with habitual natural activity.[200]

When the grace of the New Law is infused into the soul, it is always accompanied by other divine benefits, divinizing gifts and virtues which enable the Christian to live and act habitually on a supernatural plane. Chief among these infused habits are faith, to supernaturalize the intellect, and charity, to elevate and sanctify the will. Thus not only is the soul itself endowed by grace with a higher life, but its powers also are given a deifying share in God's mind, through faith, and God's will, through charity. Made God's adopted children by an ingrafted supernature which is a share in divinity, men are made at the same time one with God in mind and heart through these theological virtues.[201] Hope, a third theological virtue, the infused moral virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost are other

[198] *Ibid.*, q. 106, a. 2.
[199] *Ibid.*, q. 93, a. 6.
[200] *In Rom.*, c. 6, 22, lect. 4.
[201] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 110, a. 4, corp.

elements in the supernatural organism, all of which God places at the service of grace, faith, and charity.

Pre-eminent among the virtues and gifts in freeing the souls of men is the habit of charity. It is this virtue, above all others, which liberates the soul and the will from its proneness to evil choices, by giving our freedom a drive towards good which more than counteracts the vicious tendencies of fallen nature. Though the supernatural life of grace and charity does not exclude from the Christian life the struggle against temptation and wicked inclinations, the power of evil is broken by the habitual direction which charity gives the will towards God and goodness. The man freed from sin and in the state of grace can turn with greater freedom to good than to evil, no matter how strong the still-existing tendencies to sin may be. The "law of sin," as St. Paul calls it,[202] still dwells in his members; yet sin has lost its dominion, if not its power of rebellion. Those who are not justified and sanctified by the infusion of grace and charity, sin dominates and "captivates," [203] so that they inwardly consent to sin and act outwardly in a sinful manner; those, on the other hand, who are united to God in charity, are made "prisoner to the law of sin" only to the extent of suffering movements of concupiscence which tempt to sin.[204]

Thus grace and charity are the restorative of human nature's original bias towards goodness, and the corrective of its bent toward sin. Sin (*lex fomitis*) has lost its domination; if it attacks to regain its ascendency, it can always be conquered by the just man who uses the grace given him, for God does not allow him to be tried beyond his strength.[205] He will observe the law of God as a free man, willingly, and not because he is forced to do so, after the manner of a slave.[206]

[202] Romans 7: 23.
[203] *Ibid.*
[204] *In Rom.*, c. 7, lect. 4.
[205] *Ibid.*, c. 6, lect. 4.
[206] *Ibid.*, c. 6, lect. 3.

Thus the New Law's first work in the liberation of the human soul is the overthrow of sin's dominion. After the infusion of grace sin may be an insurgent, but need never be a victor unless the free Christian will lays down its supernatural arms and abjectly surrenders.[207] And the more the life of grace and charity develops in the soul, the greater becomes the Christian's freedom from the bondage of sin.

In a more positive manner, the New Law bestows freedom upon the soul by giving it a voluntariness in the pursuit of what is right which cannot be otherwise present in the human heart. This disposition and readiness for virtuous action flows especially from charity. Friendship with God through charity impels the soul to comply readily with His will, since "it is proper to friendship to agree with a friend in what he desires. Now the will of God is set forth for us in His precepts. So it pertains to our love of God to fulfill His commands, according to the text: 'If you love Me, keep my commandments' (John 14: 15)." [208] St. Thomas explains why this service of love is a free service: "He who loves someone, repays what he owes him with willingness and delight, and generously adds something over and above; therefore the whole fulfillment of the law depends upon love. . . ." [209]

Some men must be compelled to goodness by the threat of punishment, but not those who live by grace and charity. "These are so disposed that of themselves they freely do what law commands. . . . They are a law unto themselves, possessing charity, which gives them an inclination that takes the place of law, and leads them to act with freedom." [210] Love, that is, the supernatural love which is charity, gives the Christian a liberty in the pursuit of justice which would impel him to do exactly what the law requires, even if there were no law.[211]

[207] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 106, a. 2, ad 2: "The New Law . . . as far as it is concerned gives sufficient help to avoid sin."

[208] IV *Cont. Gent.*, c. 22. [209] III *Cont. Gent.*, c. 128. [210] *Ibid.* [211] *Ibid.*

In his commentary on St. Paul's dictum, " Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom," St. Thomas sums up the relationships existing between law, love, and liberty in this manner:

> . . . A free man is the cause of his own actions; a slave, one whose actions are caused by a master. So whoever acts of himself, acts freely; but he who is moved by another, does not act freely. Therefore one who avoids evil not because it is evil, but because he is impelled by the Lord's commandment, is not free; but one who avoids evil because it is evil, is free. Now it is the Holy Ghost who brings this about; He perfects the mind inwardly by a good habit, with the result that out of love one avoids evil just as if a divine law were commanding. A man of this sort, then, is called free, not because he is not subject to divine law, but because he is disposed by his good habit to do what the divine law prescribes.[212]

That charity itself is something we are bound to by a divine precept has no bearing on the fact that where it is present it gives freedom in the fulfillment of God's Law. For other precepts may be observed in a servile manner out of fear, but not the first and the greatest commandment. It cannot be observed without voluntariness and full freedom.[213]

The New Law of grace and charity thus interiorizes, as demands of love, precepts which for the unjust man are purely external hindrances to the use of liberty. For the just man there is no strain, no compulsion in obedience to law. Indeed, this spontaneous identification of his own desires with the requirements of law places him, in a sense, outside the law.[214]

By liberating men from the dominion of sin and by making the just man a law unto himself, the New Law of love is truly the law of liberty, delivering the will from its chief impediments in the way of goodness. This interior freedom overflows into external activity in two ways: it enables the Christian to do willingly whatever is exteriorly required of him as necessarily

[212] *In II Cor.*, c. 3, lect. 3.
[213] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 44, a. 1, ad 2.
[214] *Ibid.*, I-II, a. 93, a. 6, corp; ad 1.

connected with the reception, preservation, or increase of grace and charity; it leaves him free with regard to outward actions which have no necessary relationship to his salvation.[215] In a word, what *must* be done is done with willingness; what *may* be done without prejudice to the soul's eternal interests is done with like freedom, the love of God and neighbor always the predominating motive.

Among the external acts which have an intimate and necessary connection with the life of grace and charity are the Sacraments.[216] Only a misuse of liberty will neglect these means, which are essential to the life of grace and Christian freedom. The moral precepts too, which are common to both Old and New Laws, must be observed as essential for the life of grace and virtue; they command or forbid actions which are necessarily in conformity with, or in opposition to, grace and charity.

But beyond this the New Law does not go in placing limitations upon the Christian's freedom of choice. "The New Law had no other external works to determine, by prescribing or forbidding, except the sacraments and those moral precepts which pertain to the nature of virtue, for instance, that one must not kill, or steal, and so forth." [217]

In all other matters we are free to choose, "through the promptings of grace," [218] how we shall serve God, determining for ourselves in which way, of the many possible good ways, we shall endeavor to serve Him.

To a certain extent, of course, even in these indifferent matters there are legal determinations, ecclesiastical or civil, which direct our choice. Yet human laws, as we have seen, will not derogate from Christian liberty, since grace and charity give a willing acquiescence to the just demands of all authority. "Spiritual men, in so far as they are led by the law of the Holy Ghost, are not subject to the law in those matters that

[215] *Ibid.*, q. 108, a. 1, ad 2.
[216] *Ibid.*, q. 108, a. 1; a. 2
[217] *Ibid.*, a. 2.
[218] *Ibid.*, a. 1, corp; ad 2.

are inconsistent with the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, it is an effect of the Holy Ghost that spiritual men are subject to human laws, according to I Peter 2: 13: *Be ye subject . . . to every human creature for God's sake.*" [219]

The autonomy of the Christian in the external ordering of his life is apparent from the fact that there are counsels as well as commandments in the doctrine of Christ. In the New Law the use of the Sacraments and the observance of the natural moral law are imposed as obligations; added to these are counsels which all are at liberty to follow or not, as they choose. This, notes St. Thomas, shows the marked difference between the Old Law and New, for counsels do not belong to a law of bondage as they do to a law of liberty.[220] Orders are given to slaves; advice is for free men.

Christian tradition has always regarded the observance of the Gospel counsels as an increase rather than a loss of liberty, even when the counsels become obligatory by reason of vows to observe them. The very state of life which makes the following of the counsels a necessity is regarded as "the state of freedom," because it is, with the episcopacy, "the state of perfection." [221]

Those who live thoroughly by the law of the Gospel are expected to do whatever they do because they love what is good, not because they fear punishment. To the extent that they act in the spirit of servile fear they are acting in contrariety to the law of love which should be the supreme norm of all Christian activity. And those Christians for whom threats provide the *only* motive for obedience to law are members of the Church outwardly (*numero*) but are not so in merit (*merito*).[222]

Strictly speaking, the just are not *under* the law of the

[219] *Ibid.*, q. 96, a. 5, ad 2. Cf. also q. 108, a. 1.
[220] *Ibid.*, a. 4.
[221] *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 183, a. 1; a. 4; q. 185; q. 186.
[222] *Ibid.*, q. 108, a. 1, ad 3.

Gospel or any other law, even the eternal law. "He is under the law who refrains from evil deeds through fear of the punishment threatened by the law, and not from love of virtue," wrote St. Augustine.[223] Citing this statement, St. Thomas explains that the charity poured into the hearts of the just by the Holy Spirit gives them voluntary fulfillment of law, and it is no burden to them. And he adds another reason: the work done out of love by the just are more the works of the Holy Spirit than the personal human activity of the Christian. To the extent that these are the works of God Himself they are not done under law, for God is subject to no law.[224] This teaching is an explanation of several notable texts in St. Paul which insist upon the spiritual man's release from the onerousness of law: "Now if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law";[225] "the Law is not made for the just, but for the unjust and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for criminals and the defiled, for parricides and matricides, for murderers, for immoral people, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine."[226]

Made one in mind and heart with the Holy Spirit by the infused supernatural life of grace, the just are conformed to Him as the Legislator whose wisdom contains all law in His own eternal law. The more His divine truth penetrates their minds, the fuller becomes their knowledge of the eternal law, though no one can know it as it is in itself except God and those who enjoy the eternal vision of His essence.[227] The more His divine love penetrates their hearts, the more freely and perfectly do they consent to the demands of the eternal law.[228]

[223] *De Natura et Gratia,* cap. 57.
[224] *Summa Theol.,* I-II, q. 93, a. 6, ad 3.
[225] Gal. 5: 18.
[226] I Tim. 1: 9-11. Cf. St. Thomas Commentary on v. 9.
[227] *Summa Theol.,* I-II, q. 93, a. 2.
[228] *Ibid.,* a. 6.

Though St. Paul made every effort to emphasize the new freedom given the world by the Law of Christ, he could not fail to recognize the dangers inherent in his doctrine. From such warnings as that to the Galatians not to " use liberty as an occasion for sensuality," [229] it is obvious that misinterpretations and abuses of the idea of Christian liberty did not await later centuries. He found it necessary to remind converted freemen that Christ had not freed them from the moral law, and convert slaves that their spiritual liberation did not mean civil emancipation and disregard of human law.[230] St. Peter too warned against misuse of the new freedom in both of his Epistles: in the first, saying: " Live as freemen, yet not using your freedom as a cloak for malice but as servants of God "; [231] in the second, inveighing against heretics who " by highsounding, empty words . . . entice with sensual allurements of carnal passion those who are just escaping from such as live in error. They promise them freedom, whereas they themselves are the slaves of corruption." [232]

These strictures of the Apostles were repeated by the Church in the Middle Ages and in Reformation times against others who appealed to a false concept of Christian freedom as warrant for rebellion against authority, civil as well as religious. The Council of Constance, for example, condemned the teaching of Wiclif and Huss that civil and ecclesiastical authority could not be held by rulers or prelates who were in mortal sin; [233] the Council of Trent condemned the Lutheran error that those who were justified by faith in Christ were free from the observance of the commandments of God and the Church.[234]

But no misuse of Christian liberty can be a justification for denying it or minimizing its importance. There are perils attached to all God's benefits, natural and supernatural, and the

[229] Gal. 5: 13.
[230] *In Rom.*, c. 6, lect. 3. Cf. also *In Titum*, c. 2, lect. 2.
[231] I Peter 2: 16.
[232] II Peter 2: 18-19.
[233] Denz. 638; 639; 641; 595; 656.
[234] Denz. 804; 830.

greater and nobler the boon, the more terrible is its profanation. As Father Chenu has written, " Some have abused this great gift, and the more precious a good the more dangerous its abuse—we have only to think of the havoc wrought to Christendom by the ' evangelicalism ' of Luther. But the fact that some have misused the liberty of the Gospels is no reason for renouncing it, though I fear that too often we are apt, through a sort of timidity, to treat it as something dangerous. None the less it is the teaching of St. Paul, and with him we are at the heart of the Christian ' mystery.' " [235] Ignoring the inward character of Christian freedom will mean an overemphasis on the externals in Christian life. If a false Christianity has made the liberty of the Spirit suspect, the evil will not be repaired by a tendency to the opposite extreme, which saps of legalism and of the formalism that our Lord Himself found so repellent in His own day.

The abuse of the freedom that is theirs by the grace of the Holy Spirit means for individual Christians a loss of that inward liberty; but for Christians as a body whose soul is the Holy Ghost liberty is a connatural condition which cannot be lost. " The state of the faith of Christ . . . is related to liberty and is liberty itself: and so (St. Paul) says, ' You have been called to liberty, brethren.' " [236]

6. *Infused and Acquired Virtues*

Nothing is more glorious than liberty except virtue, that is, if it be right to differentiate liberty from virtue. For to all wise men it is clear that true liberty can proceed from nothing else. So a man

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[235] M. D. Chenu, O. P., " Christian Liberty and Obligations," *Blackfriars*, XX (April, 1939), 275.

[236] *In Gal.*, c. 5, lect. 3.

" Freedom is not something exterior to religion—in a profound sense *Christianity is freedom,* and the words which have become canonized and set apart as the classical terms of Christian theology—redemption, salvation . . . —possessed for their original hearers the simple and immediate sense of the delivery of a slave and the release of a captive. " C. Dawson, " Christian Freedom," p. 1.

is virtuous in so far as he is free, and free in so far as he is virtuous. Vices alone bring men into slavery, to persons, and to things: and though bondage to a person may seem at times the more miserable slavery, the thraldom of vice is by far the worse. What, therefore, is more lovable than liberty? What more favorable to one who has any reverence for virtue? We read that all good princes have promoted it, and that none have ever trampled upon liberty but the manifest enemies of virtue.

Those words are John of Salisbury's famous and often-quoted tribute to liberty.[237] St. Thomas would agree whole-heartedly. But in his more precise way he would not have been satisfied with a general term like "virtue." He would have made it clear that the liberating virtues *par excellence* are the infused theological virtues, charity above all. He would point out too that the moral virtues, infused and acquired, have their own special role, under the dominion of charity, in preserving, protecting, and promoting Christian freedom. In fact, St. Thomas could have said without exaggeration that his whole moral and ascetical doctrine in the Second Part of the *Summa Theologica* might serve as a textbook for true liberty. It is no mere coincidence that his treatment of all the virtues is climaxed by a tract on the *status libertatis*, the state of perfection in which live the bishops of the Church and religious.[238]

The intimate relationship between true liberty and the virtues, a relationship which John of Salisbury suggests is an identity, was seen even by pagan moralists. Aristotle linked freedom with virtue,[239] and St. Thomas shows his agreement with that much at least of the Philosopher's doctrine on slavery by citing, in his commentary, a text of the Scriptures: "They that despise Me, shall be despised."[240] Epictetus put it bluntly,

[237] *Polycraticus* or *De Nugis Curialium*, lib. VII, cap. xxv, *PL*, CXCIX, 706.

[238] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, qq. 183-189.

[239] I *Politica*, 4.

[240] I Kings 2: 30. Cf. *In I Pol.*, lect. 4: "Liberty and servitude . . . are determined by virtue: so that those who are virtuous are free and noble, but those who

"No bad man is free." [241] Seneca held that "to obey God is freedom." [242]

Men like these knew nothing of the supernatural life and infused virtue. They regarded freedom as the product of natural efforts, and all virtue as the human development of natural powers and tendencies. But their doctrine gives a glimpse of the type of spiritual liberty preached by the Apostles and bestowed on believers through the grace of Christ. Aristotle even recognized the possibility of a degree of virtue which would emancipate a man from subjection to law. In a passage which recalls St. Paul's *Lex non est justo posita,* he says, "For men of pre-eminent virtue there is no law—they are themselves a law. Any one would be ridiculous who attempted to make laws for them." [243] A man with such intellectual and moral qualities, he says, "may truly be deemed a God among men." [244] Moreover, "he ought not to be a subject—that would be as if mankind should claim to rule over Zeus, dividing his offices among them. The only alternative is that all should joyfully obey such a ruler, according to what seems to be the order of nature, and that men like him should be kings in their state for life." [245]

The intellectual virtues, and especially the moral virtues the pagan philosophers knew, play their part in the development, if not the birth, of Christian liberty. Infused moral virtues always accompany the theological virtues and habitual grace in the soul,[246] but their presence does not eliminate the usefulness of acquired virtue. For habits of prudence, justice, and the like produced by repeated acts give a facility in opera-

are vicious are slaves and despised, as the Lord says in I Kings 2: 30: 'They that despise me shall be despised.'" Cf. also *In III Pol.,* lect. 14.

[241] "The Discourses of Epictetus," Bk. IV, Ch. I. *The Stoic and Epicurean Philosophers* (N. Y., 1940), p. 406.

[242] *De Vita Beata,* xv, 7. Cf. *Seneca: Moral Essays* II (London, 1935), 141.

[243] III *Politica,* 13.

[244] *Ibid.*

[245] *Ibid.*

[246] *Summa Theol.,* I-II, q. 63, a. 3.

tion which the corresponding infused habits do not always bring to the soul. There is no absolute need for acquired virtue for the attainment of Christian freedom of mind and will, since grace liberates the soul from the grip of sin instantaneously. Yet the activation and development of that supernatural freedom will ordinarily demand acquired moral virtues also for the survival of that liberty. Where grace does not find these natural habits ready for use, it will help to produce them. The ease and spontaneity in virtuous action thus achieved by the harmonious interaction of the infused and acquired virtues is a tremendous contribution to the supernatural freedom of the Christian soul.[247]

It is clear that Catholic teaching, while never conceding the perfection of liberty and of virtue to any natural goodness whatever, is far from denying the usefulness, and *ut in pluribus*, the necessity, of acquired habits of virtue as a condition of a lasting spiritual liberty. Their utility, under the guidance and impetus of charity, no one can ignore. To admit that, however, is not to contradict the more important truth that the solution of the problem of human freedom must always be a supernatural, Christian, and revealed solution. The substance of that solution is that the tension between law and liberty, between the demands of authority and the desire for autonomy, is relieved supernaturally by a union of law and liberty in the infused "law of liberty," which consists primarily in the grace of the Holy Spirit and that faith in Christ which works through charity; secondarily, in the written commands and counsels of the Gospel. There is no other solution, no *via media* between the supernatural order, wherein the conflict between law and liberty is solved, and the natural order, wherein it can never be solved completely.

[247] For a fuller treatment of the moral virtues and the relationship between those which are infused and those naturally acquired by repeated action, see R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O. P., *The Three Ages of the Interior Life* (St. Louis, 1947), pp. 57-66.

Christian teaching has always insisted that man cannot live successfully on the purely human level; he must either rise above it, or fall below it. So also man cannot be spiritually free on the purely human or natural level; the perfecting of his freedom must come from above, or liberty itself will drop below the human plane into subhuman spiritual bondage. The revealed fact of the matter is that men are born in that bondage, and there is no natural release from it. There are, then, these alternatives: the soul possesses grace and charity, and is free, or it does not, and is unfree. The doctrine of the Church that "grace perfects nature, and does not destroy it," has as its corrollary the truth that nature is imperfect without grace.

To attribute to natural virtues, therefore, the power of liberating the souls of men from the bondage of sin and the tyranny of passion is the error of Rationalism and Naturalism, which human experience should long ago have seen through, even without the help of express condemnation in revealed doctrine. Naturalism's denial of original sin leads its supporters to "think that free will is not at all weakened and inclined to evil. On the contrary, exaggerating rather our natural virtue and excellence and placing therein alone the principle and rule of justice, they cannot even imagine that there is any need at all of a constant struggle and a perfect steadfastness to overcome the violence and rule the passions of our nature." [248] In other words, Naturalism conceives the human will as already perfect in its freedom, without need of further liberation. Human history itself should be the first witness against so patent a fable. Is there any clearer lesson from the past and present than that there is something wrong with the race?

The very existence of these natural virtues without the infused life of grace to perfect them and give them direction to man's supernatural destiny, is suspect. Leo XIII has expressed this doubt in *Testem Benevolentiae*:

[248] Leo XIII, *Humanum Genus* (April 20, 1884).

Even if we admire the sometimes splendid acts of the natural virtues, how rare is the man who really possesses the habit of these natural virtues? Who is there who is not disturbed by passions, sometimes of a violent nature, for the persevering conquest of which, just as for the observance of the whole natural law, man must needs have some divine help? If we scrutinize more closely the particular acts We have above referred to, we shall discover that oftentimes they have more the appearance than the reality of virtue.[249]

This doctrine of the Church is not to be confused with the profound pessimism of those " reformers " who regarded human nature as totally vitiated and corrupted by original sin. The loss of original justice and the wounding of nature do not imply decay;[250] moreover, the wounds suffered in intellect, will, and the lower appetites are curable through the grace of Christ.[251] The teaching of the Church steers a safe and true course between the extreme optimism of Naturalism and the extreme pessimism of Lutheranism.

If human nature could not have preserved its original freedom in grace even in the state of innocence without divine aid, as the Council of Orange taught,[252] with how much more reason does it now require supernatural assistance to regain its lost liberty. Its subjection to God, which is of the essence of perfect freedom, was never a natural endowment; " otherwise," says St. Thomas, " it would have remained after sin, for even in the demons the natural gifts remained after sin." [253] No matter

[249] Cf. also *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 4. Note that Leo did not deny moral goodness to individual acts of men who are not in the state of grace. Such a denial is the error, condemned by the Church (Denz. 1025; 1035; 1298; etc.) that all the actions of sinners are sins. Leo raises the question of *habits*, i. e., stable inclinations toward virtuous acts.

[250] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 85, a. 1.

[251] *Ibid.*, a. 3.

[252] Denz. 192: can. 19: "*Neminem nisi Deo miserante salvari.* Natura humana, etiamsi in illa integritate, in qua est condita, permaneret, nullo modo seipsam, creatore suo non adjuvante, servaret; unde cum sine Dei gratia salutem non possit custodire, quam accepit, quomodo sine gratia poterit reparare, quod perdidit?."

[253] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 95, a. 1.

how perfectly the principles of nature may be developed in a natural way or how helpful acquired virtues may be in the service of charity and the other infused virtues, they cannot be a substitute for the moral freedom only grace can give. Just as no intellectual perfection of the natural man can serve as vicar for faith in the liberation of the mind, so too no moral excellence which is merely natural can take the place of supernatural charity in freeing the will. We can readily grant that mental and moral growth ameliorate the condition of those who do not live by faith and charity, but that condition is spiritual bondage none the less.

Besides insisting upon the indispensability of grace and charity for the perfection and fullness of virtue,[254] St. Thomas has pointed out that there are inherent deficiencies in acquired virtues which are not to be found in infused moral virtues, apart from the fact that natural virtues cannot bring a man to supernatural beatitude. He shows that it is entirely possible to possess natural virtues and at the same time commit sinful actions opposed to these virtues, since isolated acts will not directly destroy the habit which has been acquired by many previous acts of virtue.[225] The infused moral virtues, on the other hand, though they do not of themselves always give that ease in virtuous activity which comes from long practice, are infallibly opposed to every gravely sinful act against the particular virtue. A natural virtue will dispose its possessor against sin *ut in pluribus*, "in the majority of cases"; an infused virtue, against all sins opposed to it.[256]

[254] *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 65, a. 2.

[255] *Ibid.*, q. 63, a. 2, ad 2: "Mortal sin is incompatible with divinely infused virtue, especially if this be considered in its perfect state. But actual sin, even mortal, is compatible with humanly acquired virtue; because the use of a habit in us is subject to our will. . . . And one sinful act does not destroy a habit of acquired virtue, since it is not an act but a habit, that is directly contrary to a habit."

[256] *De Virtutibus in Communi*, a. 10, ad 14: "Infused virtue effects that a man in no way obey the concupiscences of sin; and while this virtue remains, it does

When this doctrine is considered in conjunction with St. Thomas's further teaching that if a man be in the state of sin, "it cannot be that he remains for a long time without mortal sin,"[257] the so-called spiritual "liberty" possible through natural virtue is seen to be at least very dubious and unstable. A man in the state of grace cannot, short of a special privilege, avoid all venial sin; a man not in the state of grace cannot avoid all mortal sin, and one such sin will lead to another.[258]

Even though one serious sin against an acquired virtue does not introduce into the soul the opposed evil habit, the undermining of the good habit is started. The virtue is no longer in a stable condition. And the likelihood of the first sin being followed by others is a further threat to the virtue's existence unless there is an infusion of the life of grace to rectify the appetite and restore the will's dominion over sin. Only repeated acts of sin will destroy the acquired virtue, and replace it with a vice. But, as Père Garrigou-Lagrange has pointed out, "before that destruction, it exists *in the state of a more or less stable disposition.* If we do not admit that, we would never be able to say when it does start to become unstable, before being completely destroyed."[259] He cites several of St. Thomas's most noted commentators in support of his opinion.[260] And his conclusion is important for a proper understanding of the role of grace in giving the soul its spiritual freedom:

> In the state of mortal sin there can be *true acquired moral virtues,* but they are then *in the state of a more or less stable disposition,* from the fact that the subject in which they exist is turned away from even its natural last end; for that reason it is weak for the

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this infallibly. Acquired virtue falls short in this respect, although in only a few instances, as other natural inclinations fail in only a minor part."

[257] *Summa Theol.,* I-II, q. 109, a. 8.

[258] *Ibid.*

[259] R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O. P., "L'Instabilité dans L'État de Péché Mortel des Vertus Morales Acquises," *Revue Thomiste,* XLIII (1937), 255-262. (Italics the author's). Cf. also *The Three Ages of the Interior Life,* pp. 58-59.

[260] *Ibid.,* pp. 260-262.

accomplishing of moral good, even in the natural order. . . . This frailty of the acquired moral virtues in the sinner is consequently altogether unlike that of those same virtues and the infused virtues in the just man. If it is true to say that the Christian in the state of grace has received a precious treasure in a fragile vessel, it is clearly yet more true to speak of the instability of the virtue which is still left in a soul turned away from God.[261]

It is evident then that when everything has been said that can possibly be said in favor of natural virtues independent of sanctifying grace, they still fall far short of man's needs on the natural level. And once the truth of Christian revelation has been accepted concerning man's supernatural destiny, we appreciate the pertinence of the question posed by Pope Leo XIII and his answer to it:

Of what use are the natural virtues unless the gift and strength of divine grace be added? Aptly does St. Augustine say: Great power, and a rapid pace, but out of the course. (*In Ps.* 31: 4). For as the nature of man, because of our common misfortune, fell into vice and dishonor, yet by the assistance of grace is lifted up and borne onward with new honor and strength; so also the virtues which are exercised not by the unaided powers of nature, but by the help of the same grace, are made productive of a supernatural beatitude and become solid and enduring.[262]

There can be no true spiritual freedom, then, without grace and supernaturally infused virtues. There may be degrees in the lack of that freedom, degrees proportionate to the strength and stability of natural virtues, just as there are degrees in the perfection of that liberty, proportionate to the perfection of grace and charity in the soul.

In this correlation between infused virtue and spiritual liberty lies the chief reason why in Christian preaching comparatively little stress is laid upon the independence of the Christian soul and its God-given autonomy, except to emphasize the immense

[261] *Ibid.*, p. 262. (Italics the author's).
[262] *Testem Benevolentiae.*

personal responsibility that flows freedom of choice. The Church has always concentrated her forces on the inculcation of virtue, i. e., on the fulfillment of duty, with God's help; she has done so in the realization that full liberty of soul is the connatural sequel of supernatural virtue, like the bloom of countenance that flows from fullness of health.

As for individual freedom, so also for true freedom in the social order supernatural virtues are essential, especially the theological virtue of charity, in which all the others, infused and acquired, are united and directed toward the supernatural last end of human life. Without charity in society a true spiritual liberty worthy of a Christian order cannot exist. True freedom must always ebb and flow with the decrease or increase of divine love in the members of society. For liberty, as well as for true unity and peace among men, we must look to charity as the supreme principle of individual and social life.

In this connection it is important to note that charity need not be found in each member of society for Christian freedom to flourish in economic and political life.[263] The more men are imbued with the spirit of Christian love, the more surely will liberty prosper. But even those who lack charity may regard it highly and appreciate the gift and its benefits in this world and the next. A proper understanding of and a reverent esteem for charity and the supernatural life is in itself a contribution to liberty and an approach to it in those who have not possessed it or who may have lost it. " There are two kinds of knowledge of charity, experimental and speculative; and one without charity can have the second, though not the first.[264] It is not necessary . . . that all possess charity, but only a number sufficient to affect the tone of the society; the others may speculatively, if not experimentally, appreciate it; and since grace does not destroy nature, they should feel no repugnance to

[263] Cf. L. A. Ryan, O. P., " Charity and the Social Order," *The Thomist,* IV (April, 1942), pp. 263-264.

[264] *III Sent.,* d. 23, q. 1, 2, al 1.

cooperating in the life of a society with charity as its principle of order." [265]

Not the least of the errors of Naturalism and the humanitarianism it sponsors is to ascribe the origin, growth, and perfection of charity to inborn natural powers. The superstition is epidemic in Christendom, which prizes the ideal of charity without understanding it. For charity is not of nature; it is of God directly, and of God alone. And its effects are from God, liberty included. Mankind can be certain God will give it to those who seek it, for He has commanded men to live by charity and He does not command the impossible or refuse to bestow the means to fulfill His precept.

Therein lies the reason why the Church alone can justly claim to be the true emancipator of mankind, and the mother of liberty. For supernatural life and virtue, and charity above all, the greatest of the virtues, are bred, nourished, and brought to maturity by the Church. If it be true that " charity, as a virtue, belongs to the Church,"[266] then true liberty belongs to her also. For liberty and love are inseparable.

Love is the root of liberty. The well-ordered love of charity frees man from the bondage of an evil will and creates the autonomy of which St. Augustine wrote:

> Love, and do what thou wilt. Whether thou hold thy peace, of love hold thy peace; whether thou cry out, of love cry out; whether thou correct, of love correct; whether thou spare, through love do thou spare; let the root of love be within, of this root can nothing spring but what is good.[267]

[265] Ryan, *loc. cit.*
[266] Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum.*
[267] *In ep. I Joann.*, tr. 7, n. 8; *PL*, 35, 2033.

Chapter III

DEMOCRACY AND CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

Up to this point we have been examining from the theological viewpoint the character and causes of Christian freedom. In the course of that examination we have considered other freedoms with which it is linked. Though our chief concern was the inner liberty which is specifically Christian, we have also touched upon certain types of freedom which are today, more than ever before, the prime objective of popular political and social movements. In the modern mind these liberties are associated with the democratic form of government. We propose now to study the relationship between the inner Christian freedom already described and the external freedoms of modern democracy, in an effort to demonstrate that without the aid of Christian liberty external freedoms tend to harm both the individual and society; that their good use depends upon Christian faith and charity; that abuse and loss of these freedoms is inevitable without Christianity. In other words, the wide personal freedoms which are essential to a democratic order will do more harm than good to the common weal where Christian freedom does not foster and protect them by sanctifying them and consecrating them to God. Or, to put it another way, external freedoms must be christianized (or christened) to be truly beneficial to the citizen and the State.

This conclusion is nothing more than an application to the political order of the principle that grace perfects nature, and the correlative principle that nature is very imperfect without grace. The thesis could be strongly bolstered by an investigation of the actual historical relationship between Christianity and democracy. But we must limit ourselves here to purely

doctrinal considerations regarding the relevance of Christian liberty to democratic freedoms.

To avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, it should be made clear here that we do *not* identify Christianity with democracy. That would be to identify the natural with supernatural order. Nor do we hold that Christianity needs democracy to accomplish her divine mission of saving the human soul. That would be tantamount to holding that God depends on Caesar, the Church on the State, a position with no evidence at all in at least the first three centuries of Christian history, and also as unorthodox a conclusion as it is unhistorical. What we do hold is this: democracy needs Christianity, and needs it more than other forms of government. As Maritain expresses it, " democracy needs the evangelical leaven to realize itself and to continue to exist." [268] It follows that any threat to Christianity is a danger to democracy and " the chances of liberty coincide with those of the evangelical message." [269]

Thus there is a real difference between the extreme view which would link Christianity with democracy to the point of identifying the two and the more balanced stand that democracy is nothing more than " a temporal manifestation, sometimes disfigured, of the evangelical inspiration." [270] This is the opinion expressed by Leo XIII:

> Understood as the Church understands it, the Democratic idea not only accords wonderfully with the dictates of Revelation and with religious beliefs, but it was even born and nurtured by Christianity, and it was the Gospel preaching that diffused it among the nations. Athens and Rome knew it not, until they had heard the divine voice which said to men, ' You are all brothers, and your common father is in Heaven.' [271]

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[268] " Humanism and the Dignity of Man," in *Democracy: Should It Survive?* (Milwaukee, 1943), p. 142.

[269] Maritain, *ibid.*, p. 146.

[270] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

[271] Allocution to the Sacred College, December 23, 1902.

Democracy needs Christianity. The converse of that proposition, however, cannot be defended. The Catholic attitude towards the relationship between the two is excellently summarized in these three statements:

I. There is no essential opposition between Christian principles and the fundamental principles of democracy.

II. Any opposition which may exist between Christianity and democracy has its origin elsewhere than in the antagonism of principles.

III. Only by building on Christian principles will democracy successfully accomplish the generous work it has undertaken.[272]

1. *The State and Democracy in Catholic Teaching*

In Catholic teaching the State is looked upon as the perfect society in the natural order; for man's temporal needs it is the counterpart of the Church, the perfect supernatural society which cares for man's eternal and spiritual needs. The State and the Church are perfect in the sense that each has, in its own order and within the scope of its own activity, all the power and all the means necessary for the realization of its purpose. Both have authority from God, with which each may act effectively towards its own specific goal.

The State is made up of smaller, imperfect social units, that is, of families. The family, or the domestic society, is a society prior in nature to the State, and forms the cell of the body politic. What individual families cannot as isolated units procure for themselves to make human life more secure, more peaceful, and generally more livable, they can obtain together in political union under civil authority. Because of the natural interdependence of individuals and families, the State is essential for the attainment of their natural perfection and natural

[272] Cf. Leon Garriguet, *The Social Value of the Gospel* (London, 1911), pp. 143 ff., where each of the above propositions is explained.

happiness. "Man's natural instinct moves him to live in civil society. Isolated, he cannot provide himself with the necessary requirements of life, nor procure the means of developing his mental and moral faculties. It is, therefore, divinely ordained that he should lead his life—be it domestic, social, or civil—with his fellow-men, where alone his several wants can be adequately supplied." [273] By nature man is a social being.

The proper end of the State is the common temporal welfare of the citizens.[274] Every State, no matter what be the form of government, has of its nature all the legislative, executive, and judicial powers required for the attainment of the common welfare. But its end is not the last end of man. Man's last end is not natural or temporal, but supernatural and eternal. He obtains it not through the State, but through the Church. The State can help man to attain that eternal end by promoting virtue and helping to create the conditions for virtue. Otherwise it is failing to accomplish its own natural purpose.

[273] Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei.* For a summary of the Church's doctrine regarding the social nature of man see *Divini Illius Magistri* of Pius XI: "Now, there are three necessary societies distinct from one another and yet harmoniously combined by God, into which man is born: two, namely the family and civil society, belong to the natural order; the third, the Church, to the supernatural order.

"In the first place comes the family, instituted directly by God for its peculiar purpose, the generation and formation of offspring. For this reason it has priority of nature and therefore of rights over civil society. Nevertheless, the family is an imperfect society, since it has not in itself all the means for its own complete development; whereas civil society is a perfect society, having in itself all the means for its peculiar end, which is the temporal well-being of the community; and so, in this respect, that is, in view of the common good, it has pre-eminence over the family, which finds its own suitable temporal perfection precisely in civil society.

"The third society, into which man is born when through Baptism he receives the divine life of grace, is the Church; a society of the supernatural order and of universal extent; a perfect society, because it has in itself all the means required for its own end, which is the eternal salvation of mankind; hence it is supreme in its own domain."

[274] "This end and object, the common welfare in the temporal order, consists in that peace and security in which families and individual citizens have the free exercise of their rights, and at the same time enjoy the greatest spiritual and

Nature has not formed society with the intent that man should seek in it his last end, but that in it and through it he should find suitable aids whereby to attain to his own perfection. If, then, a civil government strives after external advantages merely, and the attainment of such objects as adorn life; if in administering public affairs it is wont to put God aside, and show no solicitude for the upholding of moral law, it deflects woefully from its right course and from the injunctions of nature: nor should such a gathering together and association of men be accounted as a commonwealth, but only as a deceitful imitation and make-believe of civil organization.[275]

Though both State and Church are self-sufficient within their own spheres of activity, their independence of one another does not mean that they cannot be, or should not be, mutually helpful. The State should, by promoting the true temporal interests of its people, aid them towards a virtuous Christian life; on her part the Church, through her teaching and ministry, will help the State in maintaining due order.

. . . The Founder of the Church willed her sacred power to be distinct from the civil power, and each power to be free and unshackled in its own sphere: with this condition, however,—a condition good alike for both, and of advantage to all men—that union and concord should be maintained between them; and that on those questions which are, though in different ways, of common right and authority, the power to which secular matters have been entrusted should happily and becomingly depend on the other power which has in its charge the interests of heaven. . . . When the civil power is on friendly terms with the sacred authority of the Church, there accrues to both a great increase of usefulness. The dignity of the one is exalted, and so long as religion is its guide it will never rule unjustly; while the other receives help of protection and defence for the public good of the faithful.[276]

The supremacy of the State in temporal affairs is not meant

temporal prosperity possible in this life, by the mutual union and coordination of the work of all. The function, therefore, of the civil authority residing in the State is twofold, to protect and to foster, but by no means to absorb the family and the individual, or to substitute itself for them." *Divini Illius Magistri.*

[276] Leo XIII, *Arcanum* (Feb. 10, 1880). [275] Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Christianae.*

to preclude its seeking for help from outside itself to attain its proper end. In its exercise of its function as protector of peace and civil order, the government of one State can ally itself with another against a common external enemy, and it must make such alliances if they are necessary to the common welfare. With how much more reason, then, is the State bound to seek for help from religion, without whose aid it must eventually fail and fall. For the internal disorders which spring from vice are a much more serious threat to civil peace and prosperity than any external danger. Moreover, since the State's purpose is subordinate to the end of religion, man's final and eternal destiny, the State can not justly discount or disregard the Church. At the very least the State must give the Church—not as a privilege, but as a divine right—unhampered opportunity for action among the people.[277]

A relationship of concord and friendship should exist between the Church and the State under any form of government. As far as forms of government are concerned, the Church has no prejudice except for justice; she condemns no type of legitimate regime. "So long as justice be respected, the people are not hindered from choosing for themselves that form of government

[277] Cf. Leo XIII, *Praeclara Gratulationis Publicae*: "Nothing is more foreign to her disposition than to encroach on the rights of civil power; but the civil power in its turn must respect the rights of the Church, and beware of arrogating them in any degree to itself. . . .

"Such a policy is a violation of the most sacred rights of the Church, and it breeds enormous evils to States, for the very reason that it is in open conflict with the purposes of God. When God, in His most wise providence, placed over human society both temporal and spiritual authority, He intended them to remain distinct indeed, but by no means disconnected and at war with each other. On the contrary, both the will of God and the common weal of human society imperatively require that the civil power should be in accord with the ecclesiastical in its rule and administration.

"Hence the State has its own peculiar rights and duties, the Church likewise has hers; but it is necessary that each should be united with the other in the bonds of concord."

which suits best either their own disposition, or the institutions and customs of their ancestors." [278]

Consequently the Church can be equally at home in, and contribute generously to the welfare of, any just government, whether it be monarchical, aristocratic, or democratic. It is only a corruption of any of these which will be inimical to the Church, and it is only a corruption the Church will oppose and condemn.[279]

[278] Leo XIII, *Diuturnum Illud* (June 29, 1881). Cf. also the Christmas Message of Pius XII, 1944: "It is scarcely necessary to recall that, according to the teaching of the Church, 'it is not forbidden to prefer temperate, popular forms of government, without prejudice, however, to the Catholic teaching on the origin and use of authority,' and that 'the Church does not disapprove of any of the various forms of government, provided they be per se capable of securing the good of the citizens' (Leo XIII, Encyclical *Libertas*)."

[279] St. Thomas discusses these three types of government and their corresponding corrupt forms in *De Regimine Principum*, I, c. 1: ". . . In the government of a group there is a right way and a wrong way. . . . If therefore a group of free men is governed by their ruler for the common good of the group, the government will be right and just, as is suitable to free men. If, however, the government is not organized for the common good of the group but for the private interest of the ruler, it will be an unjust and perverted government. . . . Now, if an unjust government is carried on by one man alone . . . such a ruler is called a tyrant—a word derived from strength—because he oppresses by might instead of ruling by justice. . . . . But if the unjust government is carried on, not by one, but by several, especially if they be few, it is called an obligarchy, that is, the rule of a few. This occurs when a few, who differ from the tyrant only by the fact that they are more than one, oppress the people by means of their wealth. If, however, the bad government is carried on by the multitude it is called a democracy, that is, control by the populace. This comes about when the plebeian populace by force of numbers oppress the wealthy. In this way the whole people will be as one tyrant.

"In like manner we must divide just governments. . . . If the government is administered by a multitude, it is given the name of a polity. . . . But if it is administered by a few, but virtuous men, this kind of government is called an aristocracy . . . who . . . are called the nobility (*optimates*). . . . But if a just government is in the hands of one man alone he is properly called a king. . . ." N. B. It should be observed that St. Thomas, using the terminology of Aristotle, employs the word "democracy" for the corruption of popular government. A

Modifications of these types, such as exist today in the representative democracies and in the English constitutional monarchy, are legitimate too, when they fulfill the requirements of justice towards their citizens and the Church. In fact, a mixed type of government which combines the best features of monarchy, aristocracy, and pure democracy in order to avoid the dangers peculiar to each, was regarded by St. Thomas as the best and safest in practice, notwithstanding the theoretical superiority, in his opinion, of a kingdom over other forms.

> . . . The best form of government is in a state or kinglom, wherein one is given the power to preside over all, while under him are others having governing powers. And yet a government of this kind is shared by all, both because all are eligible to govern, and because the rulers are chosen by all. For this is the best form of polity, being partly kingdom, since there is one at the head of all; partly aristocracy, in so far as a number of persons are set in authority; partly democracy, i. e., government by the people, in so far as the rulers can be chosen from the people, and the people have the right to choose their rulers.[280]

Whether St. Thomas's description of the practical ideal fits most perfectly a limited monarchy or a representative democracy has been mooted by commentators. But in any case the defence of popular government is clear enough. And the democratic ideal can be realized in more ways than one. As Pope Pius XII points out, ". . . Democracy, taken in the broad sense, admits of various forms, and can be realized in monarchies as well as in republics." [281]

Every definition of democracy includes the idea of self-government by the people, the basic assumption being that

just popular government is called today a "democracy"; St. Thomas and Aristotle called it a "polity."

[280] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 105, a. 1. Cf. Alfred O'Rahilly, "The Democracy of St. Thomas," *Studies*, March 1920.

[281] *Christmas Message*, 1944.

every citizen has a share in governing, either directly or through representatives, and every citizen is a potential officer of the government. In the formula " of the people, by the people, for the people," so generally used as a popular description of democracy, the second phrase alone is what distinguishes the democratic form from other types, since every just government must be *of* and *for* those governed. Self-government *by* the people, immediately or through elected delegates, is the determining and specific characteristic of democracy.

Liberty is another element which enters into the essence of democracy, an element even more basic than popular rule in as much as popular rule springs from the desire of freedom. " Two principles are characteristic of democracy, the government of the majority and freedom." [282]

> The basis of a democratic state is liberty; which, according to the common opinion of men, can only be enjoyed in such a state;—this they affirm to be the great end of every democracy. One principle of liberty is for all to rule and be ruled in turn. . . . The will of the majority is supreme. This, then, is one note of liberty which all democrats affirm to be the principle of their state. Another is that a man should live as he likes. This, they say, is the privilege of a freeman, since, on the other hand, not to live as a man likes is the mark of a slave. This is the second characteristic of democracy, whence has arisen the claim of men to be ruled by none, if possible, or, if this is impossible, to rule and be ruled in turn.[283]

The difficulty in Aristotle's time (and today) was to find the true concept of liberty. " In democracies of the more extreme type," he complained, " there has arisen a false idea of freedom which is contradictory to the true interests of the state. . . . Men think . . . that freedom means the doing what a man likes. In such democracies every one lives as he pleases, or in the words of Euripides, ' according to his fancy.' But this is all wrong; men should not think it slavery to live according to the rule of the constitution; for it is their salvation." [284]

[282] *Politica* V, 9. [283] *Politica* VI, 2. [284] *Politica* V, 9. Cf. *In Pol.* V, lect. 7.

The difference between a good and an evil popular government will be found in the popular attitude toward liberty. Where it is wrongly understood and defined, there cannot be a successful state. And it cannot be rightly defined except in relation to wisdom and virtue; in relation also to law and authority. The balance between freedom and law, between private autonomy and public authority, must be created by virtue; without wisdom and, especially, the moral virtues, either the authority of those governing or the autonomy of those governed will be misinterpreted and misused.

The supreme need of every State is wisdom and moral integrity. The good life, which implies mental and moral development, is its purpose; there must be an approach to that goal in the individual lives of both leaders and led, or the State fails entirely. The supreme need of a democracy, then, both for liberty and self-government, is virtue, moral and intellectual. Both are spiritual necessities for even temporal success. Without these requirements a democracy may be established, but without them it will not survive. " The mere establishment of a democracy," wrote Aristotle more than two thousand years ago, " is not the only business of the legislator, or of those who wish to create such a state, for any state, however badly constituted, may last one, two, or three days; a far greater difficulty is the preservation of it." [285] The character of the leaders is the spiritual preservative of any State. But in democracies the stability of the political order and the quality of its leadership must depend, in large measure, on the intellectual and moral caliber of the people.

2. *The Spiritual Needs of the State and of Democracy*

The goodness of any part is considered in its relation with the whole. . . . Since, then, every man is a part of the state, it is impossible that man be good, unless he be well ordered to the common good, nor can the whole be well ordered unless its parts be

[285] *Politica* VI, 5.

proportioned to it. Consequently, the common good of the state cannot flourish, unless the citizens be virtuous, at least those whose business it is to govern. But it is enough for the good of the community that the other citizens be so far virtuous that they obey the commands of their rulers. Hence the Philosopher says that *the virtue of a sovereign is the same as that of a good man, but the virtue of any common citizen is not the same as that of a good man.*[286]

No State can thrive, or survive for long, unless it is governed by men with all the intellectual and moral qualifications summed up in the word "virtue." Not only must the ruler (or the rulers, if authority be shared) have those essential intellectual and moral qualities which make him good as an individual, but he must also have special qualities fitting him for the direction of others: a type of prudence peculiar to the head of the State, designated *regnative* by St. Thomas;[287] an eminence in justice and the other moral virtues which befits his exalted position of responsibility for the souls of others.[288] When the governing of the State is in the hands of several or many, there should be in them an intellectual and moral excellence which is proportionate to the degree of their authority and responsibility.[289] The whole secret of successful govern-

[286] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 92, a. 1, ad 3.

[287] Cf. *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 50, a. 1.

[288] Cf. *De Regimine Principum.* I, c. 15.

[289] The emphasis which both Aristotle and St. Thomas place upon the virtue required in the leader or leaders of the State hardly needs to be brought to attention here. But note particularly the recurrence of the phrase *secundum virtutem* in St. Thomas's description of the mixed regime, *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 105, a. 1: "Optima ordinatio principum est in aliqua civitate, vel regno, in quo unus praeficitur *secundum virtutem*, qui omnibus praesit; et sub ipso sunt aliqui principantes *secundum virtutem*. . . ."

It is strange to find that both the older English translation (London, 1915) and the more recent *Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, edited by Anton C. Pegis (New York, 1945), which includes most of the *Prima Secundae* (Volume II) omit the phrase *secundum virtutem*, so important in St. Thomas's mind, in translating the article cited.

ment, no matter what be the form of the regime, lies in the wisdom and character of the leaders.[290]

Every State is made up of those who rule and those who are ruled; every State is also made up of good men and bad, for "the line between virtue and vice is one dividing the whole of mankind."[291] Goodness is an essential requirement in those who rule; in the other citizens, however, the same excellence in virtue is not, generally speaking, required for a successful State. Those not in authority can be good citizens without being at the same time good men if they submit at least externally to the requirements of civil law. Since the work of human law is to regulate the external rather than the internal life of the citizens, even a reluctant obedience will satisfy the minimum demands of citizenship. If the members of the community are highly virtuous and comply willingly with the law out of love for the common good and not out of fear of penalty, so much the better. The government's work is made easier; there is greater harmony in the commonwealth, a peace that does not lie upon the surface of civil life, but has it roots deep in the souls of the members of the community. But ordinarily the State can struggle along without such moral excellence in all members. It is always free to use its coercive powers against those who will not voluntarily conform to law.

What has been said regarding the morality of the citizens is proportionately true of their intellectual attainments. Generally speaking, a State can accomplish its purpose and benefit its people if there is eminent wisdom in the rulers alone. Illiteracy and ignorance among the people will not be a *per se*

[290] "Legislation is the work of men invested with power and who, in fact, govern the nation; therefore, it follows that, practically, the quality of the laws depends more on the quality of these men than upon the form of power. The laws will be good or bad accordingly as the minds of the legislators are imbued with good or bad principles, and as they allow themselves to be guided by political prudence or by passion." Leo XIII, *Au Milieu des Sollicitudes* (Feb. 16, 1872).

[291] Aristotle, *Poetica,* II.

obstacle to successful rule and civil prosperity, especially if the citizens be docile to direction by their superiors. Though under some circumstances, especially in modern times, it may be an obligation for the government to establish an educational system for all the members of the State and minimum standards of literacy, formal scholastic education is not of its nature an essential for good citizenship.

Yet in a democracy, since the role of the people in government is greater than under other regimes, the education and character of the private citizen is of vital importance, much more so than in an absolute monarchy or under the rule of hereditary aristocracy. A strong government by one or several who are wise and good can direct civil life to the common welfare by severity and strict justice even where civic virtue is not general among the people. But a democracy will not last long or provide adequately for the common good whenever virtue and respect for law are a rarity. The reason for making this reservation in the case of a democracy is to be found in the very nature of representative or popular government. Every type of regime must have leaders who excel in intellectual and moral virtue; but the democratic state must have an intelligent and virtuous citizenry also, because a democratic people are their own government.[292]

In the doctrine of Aristotle and St. Thomas we find that when they discuss representative government, they qualify their usual teaching that the virtue of the good citizen and the good man are not necessarily identical. In the *Politics* Aristotle points out that the subject who can become part of the government must be a wise and good man. "Will there then be no

[292] "The intellectual and moral factors are much more important in the disposition of a people to representative government than are the economic and social. . . . Intellectual and moral decay, whatever the material and social conditions, strikes at the very roots of the dispositions for representative government." Walter Farrell, O.P., "The Fate of Representative Government," *The Thomist,* II (April, 1940), p. 200.

case in which the virtue of the good citizen and the virtue of the good man coincide? To this we answer that the good *ruler* is a good and wise man, and that he who would be a statesman must be a wise man." [293] In a democracy, then, according to this teaching, since every man is potentially a ruler and every voter has an actual share in government through his representatives, every man should be a morally good man to be a good citizen. " In some states the good man and the good citizen are the same, and in others different. When they are the same it is not every citizen who is a good man, but only the statesman and those who have or *may have,* alone or in conjunction with others, the conduct of public affairs." [294] Where every boy " can grow up to be President," the moral quality of the people must be high.

> There is a rule . . . which is exercised over freemen and equals by birth—a constitutional rule, which the ruler must learn by obeying, as he would learn the duties of a general of cavalry by being under the orders of a general of cavalry. . . . It has been well said that ' he who has never learned to obey cannot be a good commander.' The two are not the same, but the good citizen ought to be capable of both; he should know how to govern like a freeman, and how to obey like a freeman—these are the virtues of a citizen.[295]

Nothing need be added here, with reference to democratic States, to what has been said above concerning the qualities of those who guide the State to its purpose. Virtue is the supreme requirement in this, as in any other regime. " The question of the high moral standards, practical ability and intellectual capacity of their parliamentary representatives is *for every people living under a democratic regime a question of life or death, of prosperity or decadence, of soundness or perpetual unrest.*" [296]

[293] *Politica* III, 4.
[294] *Ibid.,* 5. (Italics ours). Cf. St. Thomas, *in loco,* lect. 4.
[295] Aristotle, *ibid.,* 4.
[296] Pius XII. *Christmas Message,* 1944. (Italics ours).

In a democracy the problem of providing such leadership lies with the people themselves. Unless they recognize virtue where it exists, and appreciate it, they are not likely to choose qualified delegates to rule them. And the moral tone of the ruling body is not likely to be higher than the prevailing moral condition of the people. Pope Pius XII has pointed out that leaders who are characterized by " clear views, kindly interest, impartial and sympathetic justice and a devotion to national unity and concord in a sincere spirit of brotherhood," will emerge from nations " whose spiritual and moral temperament is sufficiently sound and fecund." Such men " are able to produce the heralds and agencies of democracy, for they live in those dispositions and know how to put them into practice effectively." [297]

It is clear then that in democracies a special emphasis must be laid on the need of intellectual and moral development in the people. It is only such development that can prepare a people for democratic government; it is only the continuation of those qualities that will preserve a truly popular government.

It must be admitted that the intellectual needs of a self-governing society are generally recognized, and efforts are made to provide for them. The development of educational systems under government supervision in modern times is a result of the political theory that a literate and well-informed electorate is one of the surest safeguards of a real democracy. Schools, it is rightly held, must include instruction in the duties of citizenship, in the history and the ideals of the nation, and in other matters which pertain to so-called " civic education."

The chief flaw in this attitude towards education in democracies is that instruction rarely goes far enough. The truths which legislation requires to be taught are seldom basic enough to preserve democratic institutions. The concept of human nature upon which real democracy is founded is not stressed;

[297] *Ibid.*

often it is not taught at all. In fact, it is usually concepts of man most opposed to democratic theory which are expounded to youth. The most basic liberty of all, the freedom of choice in the human will, can be publicly denied in the schools of lands dedicated to freedom. In our own country, for example, the theories associated with the name of John Dewey, of Columbia University, have gained a dominant place in education. When the source and end of human freedom are eliminated by the denial of God; when the very subject of freedom is destroyed by the distortion of man; when the measure and guide of freedom is annihilated by the disavowal of the moral law, all our liberties are imperilled.[298]

"A democracy without spiritual unity at least in its basic principles . . . relative to the law of God and to the dignity of human beings . . . would be insecure and defective." [299] Where is the democracy today where this spiritual unity is fostered in education? Moreover, this deficient training of the mind has been, and still is, regarded almost worshipfully as the panacea for political and social problems in democratic countries. The truth of the matter is that even if education were complete and fundamental from the intellectual standpoint, it would still be insufficient protection for the survival of democratic institutions. Moral training is even more necessary.

[298] For a fully documented account of these dangers in the United States, see Geoffrey O'Connell, *Naturalism in American Education* (New York, 1938). Cf. also Thomas F. Woodlock, *The Real Threat to American Liberties* (pamphlet published by National Council of Catholic Women, Washington, 1939); Raoul E. Desvernine, "The Attack on Freedom," *Columbia,* October, 1944, pp. 9-10.

There is ample reason in America for the protest of Pius XII: "We raise our voice in strong, albeit paternal, complaint that in so many schools of your land Christ often is despised or ignored, the explanation of the universe and mankind is forced within the narrow limits of materialism or of rationalism, and new educational systems are sought after which cannot but produce a sorrowful harvest in the intellectual and moral life of the nation." Encyclical *Sertum Laetitiae* (Nov. 1, 1939) to the Church in the United States.

[299] Pius XII, in a speech to the Roman Rota, as reported in the *Catholic News* (New York, Oct. 20, 1945).

Moral education is minimized today, and, in many quarters, derided. We have been reaping in recent years the full-grown fruits of an amoral educational system which has ignored God, become ignorant of man, and despised the moral law.[300] The American hierarchy wrote:

> This war came largely from bad education. It was not brought on by primitives or unlettered peoples. The contemporary philosophy which asserts the right of aggression is the creation of scholars. Discarding moral principles and crowding God out of human life, scholars produced the monstrous philosophies which, embodied in political and social systems, enslave human reason and destroy the consciousness of innate human rights and duties.[301]

The moral needs of democratic peoples are far more important than their intellectual needs, themselves so vital. Yet in practice it is moral education and development that is the more neglected. Without virtue in the citizens, at least to the extent of external obedience, no State can flourish, least of all a democracy.

> Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites; in proportion as their love of justice is above their rapacity; in proportion as their soundness and sobriety of understanding is above their vanity and presumption; in proportion as they are more disposed to listen to the counsels of the wise and good, in preference to the flattery of knaves. Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in

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[300] "And all the time—such is the tragi-comedy of our situation—we continue to clamor for those very qualities we are rendering impossible. You can hardly open a periodical without coming across the statement that what our civilization needs is more "drive," or dynamism, or self-sacrifice, or "creativity." In a sort of ghastly simplicity, we remove the organ and demand the function. . . . We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst." C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York, 1947), p. 16.

[301] *Bishops' Statement on International Order,* Nov. 16, 1944 (N. C. W. C. edition), p. 4.

the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.[302]

In a regime where the citizens have the widest possible liberty to follow their own inclinations, the lessening of government control of their activity will naturally increase the need of virtuous self-control. Licentiousness in a people civilly and politically free must result either in the complete degeneration of their republican institutions, or at best an abnormal increase in the coercive activity of the State.

Virtue is essential to the liberty of self-governing people.

If the people have a sense of moderation and responsibility, and are most careful guardians of the common weal, it is right to enact a law allowing such a people to choose their own magistrates for the government of the commonwealth. But if, as time goes on, the same people become so corrupt as to sell their votes, and entrust the government to scoundrels and criminals; then the right of appointing their public officials is rightly forfeit to such a people, and the choice devolves to a few good men.[303]

The Popes of modern times have been unanimous in stressing the special need of virtue in citizens of a democracy. "In a free State" wrote Leo XIII to the American people, "unless justice be generally cultivated, unless the people be repeatedly and diligently urged to observe the precepts and laws of the Gospel, liberty itself may be pernicious." [304] The same thought on the nature of free democracy was expressed by Pius XII, for he emphasized "the exalted claims that this form of government makes on the moral maturity of the individual citizen." [305]

Even more than the truth which liberates the human mind and guides men and society safely in the direction of real, rather than apparent good, goodness is required for the tem-

[302] *The Works of Edmund Burke* (New York, 1837), I, 583.

[303] St. Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio,* I, 6, cited by St. Thomas in *Summa Theologica,* I-II, q. 97, a. 1, corp.

[304] Encyclical *Longinqua Oceani.*

[305] *Christmas Message,* 1944.

poral salvation of a free people. If it be true (and history has never provided evidence to the contrary) that "sin maketh nations miserable," [306] democracies cannot expect to escape the ruinous outcome of freedom misunderstood and misused. But the truth needed for the self-guidance of a free people and the virtue needed for self-control are not accessible to human nature without divine assistance.

3. *Christian Liberty and Democratic Citizenship*

A. The Problem

A wide personal freedom of action is an essential feature of citizenship under the democratic form of government. That liberty finds its social and civil expression in freedom of worship, freedom of speech, of assembly, etc. Politically, the chief expression of freedom is in the elective power of the people. The right of a free people to choose their own lawmakers and rulers is generally regarded as the fundamental safeguard of democratic rights. In democratic theory it is looked upon as the source of the extension or limitation of civil freedoms. So intrinsic an element is this power of the ballot that it is the last formality of popular rule to be discarded by decadent republics, and the chief disguise used by tyranny to conceal undemocratic processes. An election may be the brightest proof of a living freedom, or the grim death-mask of buried liberties. But the hypocrisy of gestures towards popular franchise is the tribute of political vice to the innate virtue of this basic democratic freedom.

Yet like other liberties this power of the ballot too can be misused. There is a freedom more fundamental still, which cannot be so deflected from its true purpose; it is the sole surety for the survival of a true elective system and all the other free institutions of representative government. The basic

[306] Prov. 14: 34.

liberty for the continuance of true popular rule must be the interior Christian freedom of the human soul. Though the creation of democracy may not be due, in particular instances, to Christian liberty, Christian liberty alone can preserve it and direct the use of external freedoms to the common good. If it is true that only Christian principles can safeguard nations under any regime, it is still more true that Christianity alone can protect the democratic governments of free men. Christianity alone can generate and nourish the inner liberty without which external freedoms become a bane to society. The Christian spirit must inform and permeate the minds and wills of the leaders of a democracy, and of the people as well.

Without minimizing the need of Christian virtue in the leaders of popular governments, we must stress here the need of like character in the electorate.[307] This necessity of Christian life in the rank and file lies in the fact that " in these days more than ever it is on the people that the salvation of States largely rests." [308] The individual citizens are so important because " instead of being the object, merely passive elements, as it were, in the social order, they are in fact, and must continue to be, its subject, its foundation, and its end." [309]

Only where the freedom of the New Law of charity flourishes in the minds and hearts of the citizens will true democracy live.

[307] In his Christmas Message of 1944 Pius XII has given in some detail the qualities demanded of leaders in a true democracy. He calls for legislators who are " a group of select men . . . spiritually eminent and of strong character. These men will look upon themselves as the representatives of the entire people, and not as the mandatories of a mob, whose interests are often unfortunately preferred to what is really required for the general welfare. . . . They should be chosen because of their solidly Christian convictions, their straight and steady judgment, and their grasp of what is practical as well as equitable. True to themselves in all circumstances, they should have clear and sound principles, healthy and definite policies. Above all, they should have that authority which springs from unblemished consciences and inspires confidence, an authority which will make them capable of leadership and guidance, particularly in crises which unduly excite the people and make it likely that they will be led astray and lose their way."

[308] Leo XIII, to the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, Nov. 25, 1898.

[309] Pius XII, *loc. cit.*

Democratic government demands of the individual a "consciousness of his personality, of his duties and rights and of his own freedom along with the freedom and dignity of others";[310] it demands also a large measure of self-discipline.[311] These are requisites unattainable on the scale needed in a democracy without Christian liberty for the minds and hearts of the people. As a consequence, democratic freedoms must rest squarely on the base of Christianity, or collapse.

The very least we may say of the inner freedom given by the grace and the Gospel of Christ is that it does nothing to interfere with or impede the broadening of legitimate external liberties. Christian teaching has no enmity for these freedoms; Christian life does not make men less fitted for them. There is at least this negative contribution to true democracy from Christian liberty. But the truth and the grace of Christ which are the soul of spiritual freedom do far more than that for democratic freedoms; they make essential positive contributions to the life of a democracy by creating through the Christian virtues the temporal conditions under which alone democracy can prosper.

Always and everywhere man has been, and is, a creature whose destiny is supernatural. Whether he is the free citizen of a modern republic or the slave laborer of a modern despotism, the individual human being is ever in need of supernatural help to preserve his humanity intact, to rescue him from the saddest of human disasters, error and sin. Without constant

[310] *Ibid.*

[311] Cf. The Pastoral Letter of the American Hierarchy, Sept. 26, 1919, in Guilday, *op. cit.*, p. 332: "We must emphasize the need of laying a sure foundation in the individual mind and conscience. Upon the integrity of each, upon his personal observance of justice and charity, depends the efficacy of legislation and of all endeavor for the common good. Our aim, therefore, should be, not to multiply laws and restrictions, but to develop such a spirit as will enable us to live in harmony under the simplest possible form, and only the necessary amount, of external regulation. Democracy, understood as self-government, implies that the people as a whole shall rule themselves. But if they are to rule wisely, each must begin by governing himself, by performing his duty no less than by maintaining his right."

supernatural aid man cannot but stray from truth and justice. Not every conclusion of his reason will be false, and not every choice of his free will will be evil; yet without special supernatural help he must inevitably fail at times intellectually and morally. Without divine support to lean upon man must limp spiritually through life and frequently fall from the way of truth and of goodness.

To the extent that these intellectual and moral lapses affect the well-being of the natural social order, to that extent is society in need of supernatural aid. The State, made up as it is of individuals neither infallible nor impeccable, cannot of itself remedy the spiritual condition of its members; it cannot of itself rectify the souls of its subjects so that civil order will not be disturbed by their native deficiencies. The State's sphere is external action; it cannot touch the souls of men and heal the spiritual wounds which cripple the individual intellectually and morally, and enfeeble society. The more intimate the contact of society with its Creator, who alone can purge the mind and purify the heart of man, the more successful, the more ordered and peaceful the State will be, the more limited will be its need of employing in defence of the common good the coactive power it wields against evildoers.

Now the one Way to that contact with the Creator is Jesus Christ.

> The case of governments is much the same as that of the individual; they also must run into fatal issues if they depart from *the way*. The Creator and Redeemer of human nature, the Son of God, is King and Lord of the world, and holds absolute sovereignty over men, both as individuals and as members of society. . . . Therefore, the law of Christ ought to hold sway in human society, and in communities so far as to be the teacher and guide of public no less than private life. This being divinely appointed and provided, no one may resist with impunity, and it fares ill with any commonwealth in which Christian institutions are not allowed their proper place.[312]

[312] Leo XIII, *Tamestsi Futura Prospicientibus.*

Surely no one would dare to say today that these words of warning are mere theory. We have only to glance at the recent history of modern man for factual corroboration. Where the ideal of Christian liberty is discarded or outlawed, all true freedoms perish.

B. Two Solutions: Liberalism and Totalitarianism

Christian political theory represents an ideal in which the claims of personal autonomy are reconciled and harmonized with the rights of public authority by the New Law of charity, "the perfect law of liberty."[313] It is true that in the past nations which looked to the Church for inspiration fell far short of the ideal at times. But with Christianity completely eliminated as a guide for public life, the decay of liberty is inevitable. The State must then veer far from the true ideal of freedom either by excess or defect: by allowing an excessive individual liberty which rapidly deteriorates into licence or by lessening personal freedom, even to the extent of enslavement.

In the former case we have the error of false Liberalism, which in the name of personal freedom had, until recently, all but dethroned the power of public authority; in the latter case, we have the still worse error of Totalitarianism, which in the name of authority eliminated liberty. In both cases the root of error lies in a defection from supernatural truth, which left human reason unprotected, and from divine grace, which left the human will unassisted. When God is banished as the source and guide of complete human freedom, the individual or the State must take over the role of Liberator, and begin to usurp the place of the Holy Sprit in human life.

The evil of Totalitarianism is the far-from-unexpected reaction to the harm done public and private morality by Liberalism. It is another case of a cure worse than the disease. For

[313] Cf. Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris.*

in Liberalism we find a political order attempting to progress *without grace*; but in Totalitarianism we find a struggle for progress even *without nature*. The liberals' chief flaw was neglect of the New Law; the totalitarians' worse error is denial of the natural law.

Only the Christian conciliation of the rival demands of the State and the individual gives *both grace and nature* due emphasis, to harmonize authority and freedom. The New Law and the natural law together give men the fulness of liberty. Liberalism regards personal liberty in all its perfection as *innate and natural;* Totalitarianism considers it as *imposed and unnatural;* Christianity alone holds it to be *infused and supernatural.*

Both Liberalism and Totalitarianism are enslaving doctrines. Liberalism plunges towards spiritual and temporal bondage by the road of individual error and personal unrestraint; Totalitarianism impels mankind in the same direction by public deception and wholesale intimidation of the entire people. The liberal's path to slavery is only less direct; it is not less sure than the totalitarian's. For the liberal opens the door wide for the enslavement of the intellect by giving error equal rights with the truth; he chains the will in the dungeon of its own self-centredness by attributing to its limited strength and damaged liberty the power of self-salvation. Making man his own lawgiver and his own redeemer, Liberalism deifies the individual, who thus becomes for himself the measure of all truth and his own *summum bonum.* By undermining authority's foundations, it frees the individual from the duty of subjection; at the same time it readies the way for enslavement of the State by private individuals or groups, whose abuse of freedom is climaxed by usurpation of public power.

The logical outcome of Liberalism is theory no longer. It is history.

A musty liberalism strove to create, without the Church or in opposition to her, a unity built on lay culture and secularized

humanism. Here and there—at once the result of its destructive force and the hostile reaction to it—totalitarianism supplanted it. In a word, what was the net result after a little more than a century of those strivings without—and often against—the Church? *Human liberty buried;* forced organizations; a world which for brutality and barbarity, for its achievement of destruction and ruin, but above all for its tragic disunity and insecurity, has never known an equal.[314]

If Liberalism is the application of Naturalism and Rationalism to the political order, the extreme reaction to it is characterized by what can well be termed Unnaturalism and Irrationalism.[315] Whatever respect false Liberalism had for human nature, human dignity, and individual freedom, is completely missing from the illiberalism of the totalitarian philosophy. Whereas Liberalism laid the human mind open to slavery by giving error equal rights with truth, Totalitarianism enslaves the mind directly, with malice aforethought, by giving the truth no rights whatever. The totalitarian State, in practice as well as in principle, subjugates the intellect by deliberate fraud through every possible organ of education and information.[316] State control dominates and directs the curriculum from kinder-

[314] Pius XII *Christmas Message,* 1945 (Italics ours).

[315] Pius XII, in *Summi Pontificatus,* points out that in modern times "the drift toward chaos" includes "forgetfulness of the natural law itself . . . wherever incredulity, blind and proud of itself, has succeeded in excluding Christ from modern life, especially from public life, and has undermined faith in God as well as faith in Christ."

[316] ". . . Another explanation for the rapid diffusion of the Communistic ideas now seeping into every nation, great and small, advanced and backward, so that no corner of the earth is free from them . . . is to be found in a propaganda so truly diabolical that the world has perhaps never witnessed its like before. It is directed from one common center. It is shrewdly adapted to the varying conditions of diverse peoples. It has at its disposal great financial resources, gigantic organizations, international congresses, and countless trained workers. It makes use of pamphlets and reviews, of cinema, theater and radio, of schools and even universities. Little by little it penetrates into all classes of the people and even reaches the better-minded groups of the community, with the result that few are aware of the poison which increasingly pervades their minds and hearts." Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris.*

garten to university. It regulates the flow of information through radio, press, and screen so as to permit the masses to know exactly what it desires them to know, and nothing more. Ruthless suppression is the lot of any person or institution which dares to challenge civil control of the mass-mind. In no sense of the term, either good or evil, is there freedom of thought in such a regime. Propaganda debases public opinion, fetters it, and the most careful kind of supervision checks any rash attempt to filter the truth into public channels of information.[317] Eventually there is substituted a complete government control for rational self-direction in the life of the citizens.

The slavery that fraud creates for the mind is accompanied by a real bondage for the will through force and fear. All the *hostes voluntarii,* State-planned ignorance, State-inspired fear, State-controlled violence, are used as influences to checkmate revolt at its source in the free human will. Liberalism at least would leave the individual will absolutely free, theoretically at any rate; each man is left as a law unto himself. But Statism so dehumanizes and brutalizes the human mind and heart that it leaves no one individual free except the dictator who dominates every life without check or balance. As the personification of the State who incarnates in himself its absolute autonomy, he alone has liberty to do precisely as he wills with all he controls. And through falsehood and violence the enslaved masses are moved in whatever direction he determines.

Liberalism deified the individual and his liberty, to such an extent that in some instances at least, the liberal State became the slave of powerful private interests.[318] But Totalitarianism

[317] Cf. L. Sturzo, "Totalitarianism and the Dignity of Man," in *Democracy: Should It Survive,* pp. 36, 39.

[318] Cf. Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*: "You assuredly know . . . the ultimate consequences of this individualistic spirit in economic affairs. Free competition has killed itself. Economic domination has taken the place of untrammeled trade.

"Unbridled ambition for domination has succeeded the desire for gain. . . . Furthermore, the intermingling and scandalous confusing of the duties and offices of civil authority and of economics have produced crying evils and have gone so far

deifies the State and make the individual a slave in the fullest sense of that term, an animate tool, the *instrumentum animatum* described by Aristotle. For the totalitarian State " tends to attribute to itself that absolute autonomy which belongs exclusively to the Supreme Maker. It puts itself in the place of the Almighty and elevates the State or group into the last end of life, the supreme criterion of the moral and juridical order, and therefore forbids every appeal to the principles of natural reason and of the Christian conscience." [319]

Without supernatural assistance every State faces the impossible task of creating the dispositions, intellectual and moral, for the proper use of whatever freedom the citizens may possess. In the totalitarian systems of our day we have an object lesson in what happens to a regime where Christian freedom is openly or insidiously uprooted. In the absolute State the government takes the place of God, taking possession of the minds and hearts of the people.

> For the most characteristic feature of the totalitarian system . . . is its claim to control men's minds as well as their bodies, and in order to enforce this claim it mobilizes all the resources of the new black arts of mass suggestion and propaganda. It wages war not only by military and economic means, but by spiritual weapons that are directed against the mind and will of the peoples who oppose it—and not of them alone, but of all peoples whose sympathies may affect the issue of the struggle; that is to say, every people in the world.[320]

Thus the totalitarian State becomes in actuality a diabolical parody of the divine plan for the liberation of men, a well-plotted travesty of " the absolute order of beings and ends." [321]

as to degrade the majesty of the state. The state which should be the supreme arbiter, ruling in kingly fashion far above all party contention, intent only upon justice and the common good, has become instead *a slave, bound over to the service of human passion and greed.*" (Italics ours).

[319] *Summi Pontificatus.*

[320] Dawson, *The Judgment of the Nations,* p. 16.

[321] Cf. Pius XII, *Christmas Message,* 1944.

Having usurped God's place as the last end of the citizen, the State becomes also man's first mover. Established as the first efficient cause of all law and civil order, it culminates its blasphemy by attempting to assume in all human affairs the role which belongs to the Holy Spirit, for whose indwelling in the hearts of the just it would substitute an all-pervading influence and interference in the minutest details of everyday life.

Under the totalitarian system the divinized State becomes the measure of "truth" and the creator of "virtue." For it possesses Satanic substitutes for divine revelation and grace in the deceit of its incessant propaganda and in the coercive power of its omnipresent police. Its "truth" is a variable like the laws which the caprice of the dictator promulgates; the "virtue" of its citizens is a veneer kept fresh by fear and regimentation. Thus it imposes, restricting or extending at will, a participation of what it dares to term "freedom" upon a servile population.[322] Compulsion takes the place of a voluntariness which only nature and grace in cooperation can bring to the observance of law.

The "ersatz" freedom doled out by this fictitious divinity is channeled through a profane messiah who incarnates absolutism. He is supreme teacher, ruler, and priest of the materialist cult of the State. From cradle to grave the citizen is forced to deem him the impeccable, infallible model and director of public and private life.

The absolutisms of modern times are the *reductio ad absurdum* of the original folly of spurning the supernatural order and Christ's mediatorship between God and men. Men are now to receive, in place of the New Law and its infused freedom of the spirit, a law and liberty whose origin and aim are purely external. They must live by a law which is in no way super-

[322] Cf. the description by J. B. McAllister, of Fichte's idea of freedom in "The Influence of Immanuel Kant's Concept of Liberty," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association,* XVI (1940), 49.

natural; not even natural, at times; not instilled in the mind and heart. What "freedom" they may possess is in no sense interior. The observance of law is far less a choice than a predetermined result of coercion and fear. Thus, from the supernatural principle *Ubi Spiritus, ibi libertas* mankind drifts downwards to the unnatural, irrational *Ubi Status, ibi libertas.* And just as the Holy Spirit penetrates all of the just man's life and activity to effect his full liberty, so the State, in its attempt to maintain its role as pseudo-deity, stretches its influence deeper into men's most intimate and sacred concerns to create its own spurious brand of "liberty."

In this deceitful parody of the true divine order there is a perverse testimony to man's need of God, Christ, and Christian liberty. Counterfeits must be created in any social order which repudiates the supernatural essentials. Especially is this true among men whose traditional ways of thought are Christian, no matter how secularized the concepts have become. The totalitarian exploitation of Christian ideals is proof of the power they possess to attract the mind and the heart of man.[323] Even Communism, most outspokenly anti-Christian of the totalitarian systems, appeals to the ideals of liberty and brotherhood to win adherents. For modern man can be enslaved only in the name of liberty. No such pretext was needed before Christianity to camouflage slave ideologies. The new approach to the spread of tyranny is a witness to the effectiveness of Christian teaching, and in its way, a compliment to Christianity. The modern despot must "irrationalize" a *Christian* mind and demoralize a *Christian* will, before he can enslave.[324]

[323] Note the warning of Pius XI (*Mit brennender Sorge*) to the Church in Germany concerning Nazi "looting of the sanctuary": "You must be especially alert . . . when fundamental religious conceptions are robbed of their intrinsic content and made to mean something else in a profane sense. . . . If they do not want to be Christians, at least they should forego enriching the vocabulary of their unbelief from the Christian treasure of ideas."

[324] "All really intelligent communists know that success for them depends finally on their being able to alter radically the nature of Western man. Communism

The slavery of paganism differed from modern servitude in being primarily external; there was no effort to win internal consent, principally because it was unnecessary. But today the master must aim at an internal assent to the external bondage. He must win that approval by creating chains for the mind and the heart; he must make the ex-Christian or post-Christian man desire the despiritualization and brutalization the absolute State produces in its victims. Only such derangement can today insure the success of a servile order.

C. The Christian Solution

A well-instructed, intelligent people is vital to representative government. The democratic mind must be free from error above all on essential matters like the rights and obligations of the individual and the family, and the nature and purpose of civil society. To be really free, the citizen must be capable of more than prattle about human dignity and the rights of man; he must know and value the true bases of his dignity and his rights, which are founded on what Pius XII repeatedly terms "the absolute order of beings and purposes." That order is anterior to any regime, and no government can be just which is out of harmony with it. "Since they are established on this one identical foundation, the person, the State and the Government, with their respective rights, are so united that they stand or fall together. . . . No form of State can avoid taking cognizance of this intimate and indissoluble connection

being a garment that does not fit him, they will cut him to fit the garment. . . . They have the good sense to recognize and attack fiercely what is their major enemy: the chief tradition of our society: that Christian Faith which, above all else, has determined the kind of man who is most characteristic of our society. They know well that whoever would make a new kind of man must change the accepted purpose of human life, must fashion man toward a different end; must give him, that is, a new religion. That they seek to do, and were they to succeed in effacing the Christian tradition with their faith of Godless materialism they could undoubtedly produce the kind of human being who would fit their chosen pattern of social life." R. Hoffman, *The Will to Freedom* (New York, 1936), p. 45.

between itself and the divine order—least of all a democracy." [325]

The only firm intellectual support for a democracy is the truth of the Christian revelation, without which " human reason is left without its greatest protection and illumination; the very notion is easily lost of the end for which God created human society." [326] There will be no soundness and certainty in the principles of any popular government which ignores or outlaws the Gospel.[327]

Without the liberating truth of Christian teaching the citizens of modern States become the masses, " inert of themselves . . . and moved from outside . . . an easy plaything in the hands of anyone who seeks to exploit their instincts and impressions . . . ready to follow, in turn, today this flag, tomorrow another . . . reduced to the minimum status of a mere machine." [328] It is no long step from the spiritual servitude of error to political oppression and enslavement.

But citizens who believe in Christ's teaching are sure of

[325] *Chistmas Message,* 1944.

[326] Leo XIII, *Tametsi.*

[327] There is a notable emphasis on the need of the Gospel and of Christian faith in Pius XII's 1944 message on the nature of democracy. Nowhere do we find the Holy Father conceding to reason sufficient resources to establish and maintain full democracy, except when assisted by the directives and safeguards of divine revelation. Note, e. g., the following: ". . . that absolute order, as right reason and *particularly our Christian faith* testify, cannot have any other origin than a personal God, our Creator . . ."; a sound democracy, based on the immutable principles of the natural law and *revealed truth,* will resolutely turn its back on such corruption as gives to the State legislature an unchecked and unlimited power; " the absolute order set up by the Creator . . . *set forth in a new light by the Gospel revelation* "; " We are anxious . . . to point out along what lines a democracy befitting human dignity can secure happy results in harmony with the law of nature and *with the designs of God as manifested in revelation* "; " Thank God, one may believe the time has passed when the claim that moral and *Gospel principles* should guide the life of States and peoples was disdainfully thrust aside as unreal." (Italics ours).

This recurrent stress on the indispensability of the Gospel for the guidance of the State can be found in the pronouncements of all the Pontiffs of recent years.

[328] *Ibid.*

themselves. They know the limits of their liberty and the restraints on authority. They are not " children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine." [329] They are men, men of free minds, intellectually fitted in the best possible way for democratic citizenship. In their faith they have the principles whereby to judge to judge the legitimacy of whatever may be required of them. If the people of a democracy are men " with full freedom to set forth their own views of the duties and sacrifices imposed upon them," men who " will not be compelled to obey without being heard," [330] Christians are well equipped. The teachings they accept place them " in the position to hold their own opinions, to voice them, and make them effective in promoting their general welfare." [331]

Democratic liberties demand in the individual citizen a high degree of self-mastery if they are not to be misused. The moral tone of a free people must be exemplary if their freedom is to survive: that is a truism of political theory as well as of Christian theology.[332] The practical problem of representative government is how to create this needed self-discipline in the citizens. Education can only begin the work; it cannot complete it, no matter how expert and full the instruction may be, or how ample and effective the educational facilities. Legislation cannot do it, though it may promote self-control if there is strict enforcement of the law.

But democratic self-mastery will not really exist in citizens whose main motive for abstaining from evil is fear of sanc-

[329] Ephesians 4: 14.

[330] Pius XII, *Christmas Message,* 1944.

[331] *Ibid.*

[332] " Social righteousness depends upon individual morality. . . . There is no such thing as collective virtue which can be practiced by a community whose individual members do not possess it in any manner or degree. For this very reason, the attempt to develop the qualities of citizenship without regard for personal virtue, or to make civic utility the one standard of moral excellence, is doomed to failure. Integrity of life in each citizen is the only sure guarantee of worthy citizenship. . . ." Bishops' Pastoral of 1919, in Guilday, *op. cit.,* p. 337.

tions. Excessive legislation, moreover, tends to defeat the whole aim of a regime whose chief features are a maximum of personal liberty and a minimum of government restraint and interference. When the force of police power becomes the *chief* instrument of the State, democracy has disappeared. For the whole theory of democratic institutions rests on the assumption that the ordinary citizen can be trusted with freedom; that the majority of the people share a sense of responsibility and a reverence for the rights of others which will curb misuse of their liberties.

If education and legislation can do little more than coercion to engender the democratic spirit of willing cooperation for the common good, what is there capable of producing such a spirit? In view of the deficiencies of all the natural moral resources of society, it is evident that there can be no durability to democracy anywhere without the life-giving and life-sustaining influence of Christian liberty in the body politic. Only the Christian freedom of the human will by charity (or the supernatural " freedom of autonomy," to use Maritain's term) can protect democracy from ruinous abuse of external liberties and preserve civil and political freedom.[333]

The self-mastery demanded of a free people [334] will not be

[333] " Wherever prevails a religion other than ours, slavery is the rule and wherever that religion is weakened, the nation becames, in exact proportion, less jealous of the general liberty. . . . Government alone cannot govern; it requires either slavery, which diminishes the number of wills operative within the State, or divine energy, which, by a kind of spiritual grafting process, destroys the natural violence of those wills and enables them to act together without harming each other." J. DeMaistre, *Du Pape,* III, c. 2, quoted by Maritain, *Ransoming the Time* (New York, 1941), p. 31.

[334] " Freedom cannot be saved except by actually displaying the self-restraint, self-control and self-sacrifice which are needed to make freedom socially tolerable. We must demonstrate in the present what our forebears demonstrated in the past—that individual human freedom can gloriously serve mankind. Education in this country has largely broken with the great teachings of the moral law and our people have more and more come to assume that a little group of officeholders decide on what is right and spell it out in statute law, and that, as long as they

had without grace and charity. As a rule men will fail not only interiorly but outwardly to live according to the natural law without special divine assistance. Once a man is in mortal sin, he will sooner or later fall again unless he is blessed with the gift of habitual grace. By every abuse of free choice he will injure himself at least. This in itself is already a loss to the State, which can thrive only through the virtue of its citizens. What is more, he is very likely to harm others also, in one way or another, by the scandal of his evil example at least, if not by deliberate violation of the social virtue of justice. Such a man is only a danger to the State until his evil will is interiorly rectified. That rectification the State cannot accomplish. It can produce literate, even highly-educated citizens; or men whose deportment is legally irreproachable. But good men it cannot of itself bring into being. Men of good will are a divine achievement.

Until his human will is freed by the supernatural infusion of the life of grace and charity, the citizen, no matter how free externally, is spiritually a slave whose life must be orientated from evil self-love towards justice by fear. For, as St. Thomas says, "by sinning a man . . . falls in some fashion into the servitude of beasts." [335] This is a bondage from which neither the State nor the individual can release the soul. If that freedom is divinely given, it is Christian freedom; and the State thus receives from God in this member of society an additional safeguard of the common good.

Though it is true that there are degrees in this hidden spiritual slavery and every sinner does not attack the common welfare directly in his social relations by scandalous or unjust activity, nevertheless, the citizen in the state of sin is a potential peril to

do not violate such man-made laws, they are free to do whatever they please. Under these conditions freedom becomes licence and it rapidly evaporates." John Foster Dulles, in a commencement address reported in the *N. Y. Times,* June 20, 1947.

[335] *Summa Theol.,* II-II, q. 64, a. 3, ad 2.

external civil order, and to the extent that he is immersed in sinful living he is an actual liability rather than an asset to the State. The deeper he slips into sinful ways and the more external sins he commits, the more serious is the damage to the common good. Since the opportunities for external sin will be wider in a democracy than elsewhere, sin offers more of a threat to democratic institutions than to other social and political orders.

> It has often been very justly observed that of all forms of government, a democracy is that which demands the largest number of virtues, and consequently the largest measure of Christianity. We have never asserted that no civic or moral virtue can exist outside the Catholic religion; but this religion is better fitted than any other to teach the self-regarding and social virtues, to lift man above coarse sensuality and narrow selfishness.[336]

The just man alone can be trusted to be " a law unto himself." Though the aim of every law and lawgiver is, or should be, to make men good not merely as citizens but as men,[337] human legislation can only prepare for and promote such goodness; it cannot produce it. Only God can, and He does so through Christ and the Church.

The more leeway the State allows individual citizens over and above those liberties which are of natural right, the more need will there be of Christ and the Church to provide truth and grace for the people. If " the most urgent need of our time is the man who can control himself and his lusts, who is compassionate to his fellow men, who can see and seek for the eternal values of culture and society, and who deeply feels his unique responsibility in this universe," [338] then the most urgent need of our time is the truth and grace of Christ.

[336] Garriguet, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

[337] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 92, a. 1.

[338] P. A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, III (New York, 1937), p. 358. Sorokin adds, " this control is impossible without a system of absolute values." (p. 359).

No man can be a doer of the word as well as a hearer without divine help. And Christian teaching can do little for a State where God's grace is not used and sought. Here, it may be added, is the basic flaw in modern democracies, whose ideals, despite secularization, are fundamentally Christian: they aim at Christian purposes without Christian resources. Men cannot live a social life which accords with Christian norms without making use of Christian means. Without use of the Christian's tools—especially the Sacraments, the Mass, and persevering prayer—a Christian State cannot be fashioned. When for want of means the ideals of Christian life are seen to be unattainable in practice, abandonment of the ideals is inevitable, though lip-service may remain. No people can continue to live politically on a Christian plane, no matter how noble its intentions, without the Christian helps only God can give.

Only through grace can a free people remain free; where divine love is lacking, true liberty dies. Slavery of soul is the accompaniment of the self-love and sensual attachment to material goods which reign where charity is dethroned. That inner servitude is the first and longest stride in the direction of exterior bondage. And the surest symptom of rotting democracy is the increase of coercion; force and regimentation are the political eruption of moral decay in the citizens.

Thus every democracy has to choose between these alternatives: *grace or force.* If it embraces the first, depending for temporal success on seeking first the kingdom of God and His justice, it will live and grow; if the second, it must die. That is substantially what Pope Leo XIII told a group of French workers over fifty years ago:

> If democracy is inspired with the teachings of reason enlightened by faith; . . . if in a word, democracy means to be Christian, it will give to your country a future of peace, prosperity and happiness. If, on the contrary, . . . misled by wild illusions, it gives itself up to claims destructive of the fundamental laws on which the whole

civil order rests, the immediate effect will be, in regard to the working classes themselves, servitude, misery and ruin.[339]

To the Catholics of another republic Pius XII wrote some forty years later:

Not with the conquest of material space does one approach to God . . . but under the guidance of Christ with the fullness of sincere faith, with unsullied conscience and upright will, with holy works, with the achievement and the employment of *that genuine liberty whose sacred rules are found proclaimed in the Gospel.* If, instead, the Commandments of God are spurned . . . the very basis upon which rests true civilization is shaken and naught is to be expected but ruins over which belated tears must be shed. How, in fact, can the public weal and the glory of civilized life have any guarantee of stability when right is subverted and virtue despised and decried? [340]

[339] Allocution, Oct. 8, 1898.

[340] *Sertum Laetitiae,* to the Church in the United States. (Italics ours).

CONCLUSIONS

Modern democracy owes what is best in it to Christian inspiration. Is that debt of democracy to the Gospel so great that there is a necessary connection between the decline of representative government and the abandonment of Christian principles? Our analysis from a Catholic standpoint of one of democracy's cardinal elements, individual liberty, has tried to show that there must be in popular States a specifically Christian personal freedom or else democracy cannot survive. In a word, we have set forth (1) the theology of Christian freedom and (2) its importance and necessity for the preservation of other lesser, external liberties in a democracy.

It has been made evident that the Christian liberty of divine grace is an inner spiritual freedom which alone enables its possessor to recognize his true worth and his real limitations; which alone can lead him to discipline and dominate his anti-social tendencies and spontaneously to follow the moral law. The Holy Spirit communicates it to the soul through Christ and His Church by imparting through grace and the infused virtues an habitual inclination to the observance of the New Law of perfect liberty. This infused freedom is the freedom of the sons of God, which can be stripped of its earthly imperfections only in the next life in the blessed plenitude of the Vision of God. A closer and closer approximation to that fulness of liberty is attained here by growth in grace and the Christian virtues.

This inner supernatural liberty cannot exist among men without producing its effects in the social and political orders. For society must recognize the rights and duties of the free Christian soul, but it must also feel the external benefits that result from the infusion of the supernatural into the natural life of men. Thus, democratic self-government and personal

liberty need the protection of Christian life and freedom. The only real assurance that external freedoms will not be abused and thus do harm to the community, comes from Christian truth and charity, the prime elements in Christian freedom. For only that liberty can guarantee that measure of individual responsibility and self-mastery required where government control is at a minimum. The history of Liberalism and Totalitarianism have given us concrete evidence that Christian liberty alone can protect and guarantee external freedoms.

The general conclusion from all that has said above can be summarized in no better way than in these words of Pius XII:

> If the future is to belong to democracy, an essential part in that achievement will have to belong to the religion of Christ and to the Church. She is the mouthpiece of our Redeemer and the institution which carries on His mission of saving men. She teaches and defends supernatural truths and communicates to men the supernatural helps of grace in order to actuate the divinely established order of beings and ends which is the ultimate foundation and directive norm of every democracy.[341]

The Christian liberty of which we have been treating in these pages is nothing more or less than the fruit of the supernatural truths and supernatural helps of grace which the Holy Father regards as essentials for democracy. Whatever we have said concerning Christian freedom and its necessity in our time is implicit in the Holy Father's statement.

There are, however, some other specific conclusions to be drawn:

(1) Without the inward freedom of the grace of the New Law, popular governments will be driven more and more to the use of coercion in maintaining public order. Events have already given tragic point to a warning from Leo XIII, written some sixty years ago:

[341] *Christmas Message*, 1944.

Upon the lapsing of Christian institutions and morality, the main foundation of human society must necessarily be uprooted. Force alone will remain to preserve public tranquillity and order; force, however, is very feeble when the bulwark of religion has been removed; and being more apt to beget slavery than obedience, it bears within itself the germs of ever-increasing troubles. The present century has encountered notable disasters, nor is it clear that some equally terrible are not impending.[342]

Pope Leo was a far more accurate prophet than he would have wished to be. He continues:

The very times in which we live are warning us to seek remedies there where alone they are to be found—namely, by reestablishing in the family circle and throughout the whole range of society the doctrines and practices of the Christian religion. In this lies the sole means of forestalling the dangers now threatening the world.[343]

The remedy offered is still available; it is still the *only* alternative to force. The urgency of the Christian alternative is yet more evident when force is seen to be impotent to fulfill the purpose for which it is invoked.[344]

A practical recognition of the need of divine aid for the State is essential to correct political theory. The clearest example of the incapacity of human authority and purely human means to secure civil happiness is to be found in the history of the Jewish race before Christ. Surely if any society

[342] *Sapientiae Christianae.*

[343] *Ibid.*

[344] Cf. Leo XIII, *Diuturnum Illud*: "Rulers . . . think to coerce, by the severity of their punishment, those who disturb their governments. They are right to a certain extent, but yet should seriously consider that no power of punishment can be so great that it alone can preserve the State. For fear, as St. Thomas so admirably teaches, 'is a weak foundation; for those who are subdued by fear would, should an occasion arise in which they might hope for immunity, rise more eagerly against their rulers, in proportion to the previous extent of their restraint through fear.' And besides, 'from too great fear many fall into despair; and despair drives men to attempt boldly to gain what they desire.' That these things are so we see from experience. It is therefore necessary to seek a higher and more reliable reason for obedience, and to say explicitly that legal severity cannot be efficacious unless men are led on by duty, and moved by the salutary fear of God."

could have endured of itself by reason of the perfection of its constitution and organization, this theocracy could have done so. Its form was divinely revealed. The Chosen People had only to fit themselves into the divine pattern for their social, political, and economic life. Yet the system failed, because the Law, in which the nation put its trust, gave them no power to fulfill its precepts.

The history of Israel is manifest proof that no regime can survive without virtue. "As anyone can see who reads carefully the story of the Old Testament, the common condition of the people prospered under the Law as long as they obeyed it; and as soon as they departed from the precepts of the Law, they were overtaken by many calamities." [345] And that prosperity was due more to grace than to the Old Law, which could not be borne except with divine helps it did not confer.[346]

Israel's history contains a profound lesson for democracy. If this State, whose charter was framed by divine wisdom, if such a regime as this did not survive but rather fell into the most abject slavery because of sin, what fate awaits any government whose constitution, no matter how wise and just, is only human, and whose resources are only human because it ignores the need of divine help? St. Thomas was pointed out the salutary character of this lesson, which is for nations as well as individuals:

> God sometimes permits certain ones to fall into sin, that they may thereby be humbled. So also did He wish to give such a Law as men by their own forces could not fulfill, so that, while presuming on their own powers, they might find themselves to be sinners, and being humbled, might have recourse to the help of grace.[347]

(2) It follows that the freedom of the human soul must be the chief interest of a democratic regime; without that liberty

[345] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 99, a. 6, ad 3.
[346] *Ibid.*, q. 98, a. 1, ad 3.
[347] *Ibid.*, q. 98, a. 2, ad 3.

external liberties must be a liability rather than an asset to the commonwealth. That aim of government—liberation of the mind and the heart—is implied in the very purpose nature has assigned to the State, that is, the promotion of the good life, or the life of virtue, among the citizens. Virtue is the guarantee and guardian of interior liberty; it is likewise the only effective source of true economic, social, and political freedom.

In the concrete this means that modern democracy must cease to be neutral concerning religion, and begin actively to foster the life of the spirit in every way possible. The State can, it is true, act in a neutral manner toward particular religions, in order to avoid greater evils.[348] But it cannot be indifferent to the virtue of its citizens, and the practice of religion is essential to virtuous living. Consequently, even at the risk of alienating irreligious and atheistic elements in the population, democracy must abandon secularism and encourage religious activity by every legitimate means. For to ignore religion in education, politics, commerce, or in any other phase of public life is to concede victory no less to the enemies of the State than to the enemies of the Creator.

Among the enemies of freedom must be reckoned not only the domestic evil of sin but also our ancient adversary the devil. Since the fall of the race, deliverance from his tyranny has always been the desparate need of mankind. Collectively as well as individually men become the instruments of the devil unless they are rescued by divine grace.[349] An intellectual creature who possesses by nature powers far superior to man's, he can dominate the whole earth to any extent God may permit. Were it not for the restraint to which he is subjected (even he does not evade the inescapable subordination of all

[348] "The Church . . . does . . . not condemn those rulers who for the sake of securing some great good, or of hindering some great evil, tolerate in practice that these various forms of religion have a place in the State." Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei.*

[349] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 8, a. 7; a. 8.

things to the Providence of God), all mankind would be physically, and to some degree even morally, at his mercy—and having no charity, he has no mercy.

Not only the person but the family and the State as well will serve diabolical ends to the extent that they are not delivered by Christ from oppression by his evil power. Without grace and other spiritual aid, men must of necessity be bested in a most unequal struggle.[350]

Such aid, however, is not likely to be forthcoming in abundance to any society which will not invoke it. When an individual or a group ignore or deny the existence of malevolent spiritual powers, the devil can tyrannize, unsuspected, over their activity. It has been very justly said that "the Devil's cleverest wile is to convince us that he does not exist."[351] Communities which are materialistic, either in principle or in practice, must live unguarded from their greatest, invisible enemy. As persons become slaves in the tempter's service by their sins, so also whole societies may easily become his tools when they ignore their God, and, perhaps even as an official policy, refuse to serve Him.[352]

The invisibility of the devil's activity and his subtlety lead men too easily to discount his influence and interference in human affairs. With regard to the age-old efforts of the human race for wider freedom, it is important to note that Satan

[350] Cf. *ibid.*, I, q. 114, a. 1, ad 2.

[351] Baudelaire, quoted by de Rougement, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

[352] In this connection, it is noteworthy that Leo XIII, in 1888, treating of false Liberalism, spoke of its adherents as followers "in the footsteps of Lucifer" who "adopt as their own his rebellious cry, 'I will not serve.' For true liberty they consequently substitute what is sheer and most foolish licence." *Libertas.*

Pius XI also, in 1937, used similar language concerning the antithesis of Liberalism when he termed Communism an evil to be conquered only by prayer and fasting like the demon in Matthew 7: 20; labelled its propaganda "truly diabolical"; called the battle of our times one "joined by the powers of darkness against the very idea of divinity"; and declared that the evil is "at its origin primarily an evil of the spiritual order" whence "the monstrous emanations of the Communistic system flow with satanic logic." *Divini Redemptoris.*

always baits his snares for men with a promise of liberty.[353] With the same deceit he beguiles men from God through human agents, who will "promise . . . freedom, whereas they themselves are the slaves of corruption." [354] Consequently, whenever freedom becomes a rallying cry, then especially must men beware of error and satanic craft. The democracy which, in its vigilance for the preservation of liberty, takes no note of such a foe is already captive.

(3) The State must, then, cease to regard secular education and human legislation as its fundamental safeguard, and seek deeper sources of national survival and progress. For the root of our social disorders belongs

> . . . to the sphere of religious belief and moral convictions which have been perverted by the progressive alienation of the peoples from that unity of doctrine, faith, customs and morals which once was promoted by the tireless and beneficent work of the Church. If it is to have any effect, the re-education of mankind must be, above all things, spiritual and religious. Hence, it must proceed from Christ as from its indispensable foundation; must be actuated by justice and crowned by charity.[355]

Education and legislation do not create freedom; they can only create conditions to favor it. Truth and charity alone produce it. When spiritual and religious truth replace propaganda, and the vitality of charity replaces the mechanics of force in the State, freedom will prosper; in no other way is freedom of the spirit possible. Those nations which stress liberty as an ideal without insisting on the indispensability of truth and virtue as its conditions aim at a harvest they do not sow. There can be no fruits of freedom without deep roots in human souls.

Ultimately, the best hope for all just freedoms rests today in the souls of believers whose life of virtue infuses into the

[353] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 8, a. 7, corp.
[354] II Peter 2: 19.
[355] Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus.*

veins of society the freedom of the Spirit. They are the truest lovers of liberty because they seek it with the love of charity, and not for themselves only but for all men. They are the ablest spokesmen for liberty because they view it with the wisdom of faith. They are the bravest champions of liberty because their love of God is greater than fear of tyrants.

If Christians free in the liberty of divine grace do not rescue the world from slavery, there is no salvation for democracy. For in the mind of Christ divine truth and the charity of the New Law are not *a* solution of the problem of human liberty; they are *the* solution. There is no other. Freedom is not found in its fulness as something inborn in men, nor is it acquired; it is infused by divine power. Christ's New Law of love alone is the true principle of personal and of social freedom.

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